



SECS

VOL.

2

DEATH OF THE FAMILY



Collecting Batman v2 13-17, Batgirl v4 13-16,
Catwoman v4 13-14, Suicide Squad v3 14-15,
Batman & Robin v2 15-16, Detective Comics v2 15-16,
Nightwing v3 15-16, Red Hood & the Outlaws 15-16,
Teen Titans v4 15-16

DEATH OF THE FAMILY

He murdered Jason Todd, paralyzed Barbara Gordon and created more mischief and mayhem than any other villain in the DC Universe.

And he did it all for a laugh.

The Joker is the Dark Knight's greatest foe and deadliest adversary, but after gruesomely removing his own face in the pages of Detective Comics v2 #1, he remained absent from Gotham City for the past year - biding his time and planning for his next big punchline.

Now, the Joker's back - and he's set his sights on the entire Bat-Family.

Thanks to those who made the original releases:

**Zone-Empire
Nahga-Empire
digital-Empire
digital-TheGroup
Megan-Empire**

JK-Empire

G85-Empire

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VOL

4

SOMETIMES BAD
PEOPLE DO
GOOD THINGS...

RECENTLY.

MASADA. BASILISH'S BASE.

HARLEY, KILL
DEADSHOT!
THEN
YOURSELF.

I HAVE A
BETTER IDEA,
REGULUS.

BLAM!

YOU DIE
FIRST!

THE PRESENT.

...BUT
THERE'S A
PRICE TO
PAY FOR
THAT.

AND FLOYD
PAID IT.

A HERO'S
BURIAL FOR
DEADSHOT?

MILITARY BURIAL.
APPARENTLY, ONCE A
MARINE, ALWAYS A
MARINE. EVEN IF YOU'RE
A DIRTBAG.

WELL, GOTTA
GIVE THE DIRTBAG
CREDIT. DIDN'T THINK HE
HAD THE WALNUTS TO
DO SOMETHING
LIKE THIS.

DON'T
CONFUSE STUPIDITY
WITH BRAVERY,
BOOMERANG.

DEATH OF THE FAMILY

RUNNING WITH THE DEVIL

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I'M
HOMMMEEEE!

POISONOUS
RAIN. WHAT WILL
I THINK OF
NEXT?

HA! HA!
HA! HA! HA!
HA! HA!



YOU WON'T EVEN CUT 'IM A BREAK WHEN HE'S SIX FEET UNDER, EH, WALLER?

DEATH DOES NOT EXCUSE FLOYD FROM HIS DUTY TO THE SQUAD.

IT'S ONE THING TO BE KILLED ON A MISSION--ANOTHER TO KILL YOURSELF.



I'M THE LAST PERSON TO STAND UP FOR THAT SHEILA, BUT HE GOT REGULUS, AS FAR AS WE KNOW. THAT'S WHAT YOU WANTED.

FLOYD LAWTON WAS A HIGHLY TRAINED ASSASSIN WHO CHOSE THE EASY WAY OUT OF THE SITUATION. THAT MAKES HIM WEAK IN MY BOOK.



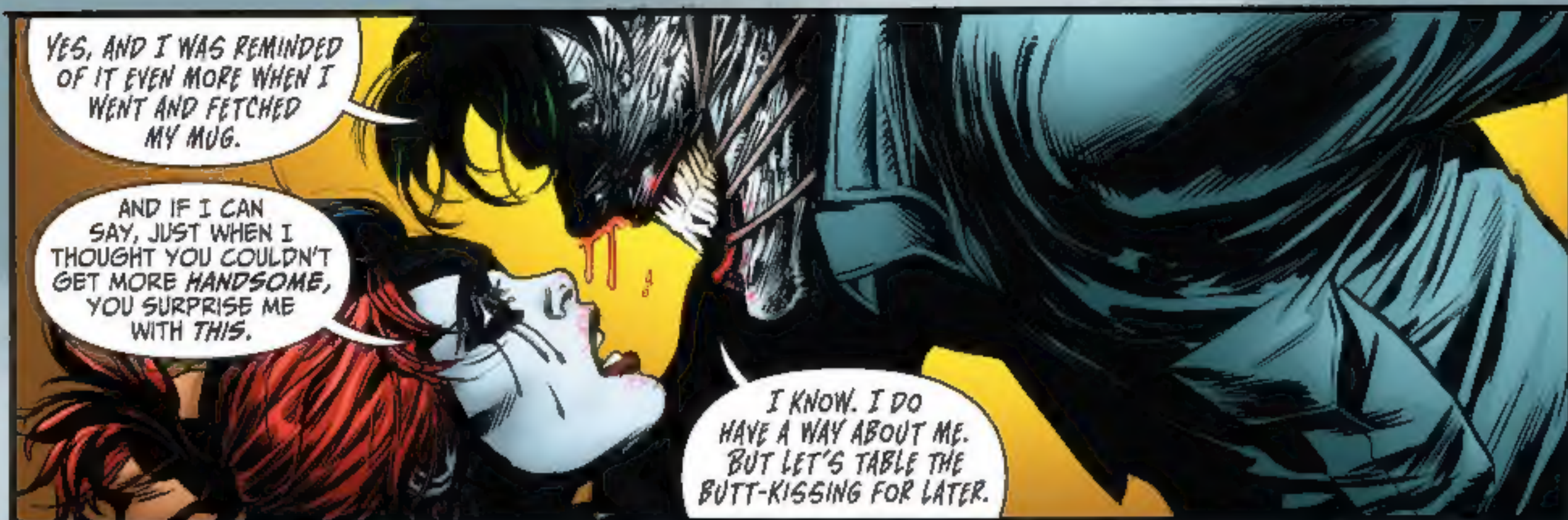
WHAT'S HAPPENING...?

SOMETHING IN THE RAINDROPS--

HONNNNEEEYYY!

GREEN RAIN? EVERYONE'S KNOCKED OUT BUT ME, WHICH CAN ONLY MEAN ONE THING...





YES, AND I WAS REMINDED OF IT EVEN MORE WHEN I WENT AND FETCHED MY MUG.

AND IF I CAN SAY, JUST WHEN I THOUGHT YOU COULDN'T GET MORE HANDSOME, YOU SURPRISE ME WITH THIS.

I KNOW. I DO HAVE A WAY ABOUT ME. BUT LET'S TABLE THE BUTT-KISSING FOR LATER.



BECAUSE, SEE, WHEN I PUT MY FACE ON, IT SMELLED FROM COTTON CANDY AND CHEAP COLOGNE. SO, I KNEW MY HARLEY HAD TRIED TO GET IT.

OF COURSE. I WANTED TO KEEP IT SAFE FOR YOU, BECAUSE I KNEW YOU WERE COMING BACK.

EVERYONE SAID YOU WERE DEAD. BUT I KNEW YOU WEREN'T.



DID YOU PRAY FOR ME EVERY NIGHT?

P-PRAY?



YES.



OR DID YOU HOLD A VIGIL? LIGHT SOME CANDLES? ASK THE BIG GUY IN THE SKY TO BRING ME BACK TO YOUR LOVING ARMS?

I, UMM-MM...

WHAT'S THAT? I COULDN'T HEAR YOU. I SEE YOU REALLY DON'T WANT TO TALK, SO I WILL.



SEE, I MISSED
YOU SO MUCH,
HARLEY...

...I FOLLOWED
YOU. KEPT TABS,
IF YOU WILL.



WATCHED YOU
AND YOUR LITTLE MISFIT
TOYS HERE FIND ONE
ANOTHER.

SORT OF LIKE
A FAMILY.



AND I WAS
GONE.
UNANNOUNCED.
WORK CALLED.
SO YOU NEEDED
SOMETHING TO CALL
YOUR OWN.



BUT THEN YOU GOT
NAUGHTY WITH A GUY WHO
WEARS HAI KARATE
FOR MEN!



SSSHH

OUCHIE!



AND SOMEONE HAS TO PAY FOR THAT.



EENY, MEENY, MINY, MOE.



HOW ABOUT CAPTAIN BOOMERANG?
FOR THE RECORD, YOU DON'T WANT TO EVEN KNOW WHAT THIS GUY IS INTO.
AND PEOPLE CALL ME SICK...



BUT YOU TWO AREN'T EXACTLY BFFS.

LET'S SEE WHO ELSE WE HAVE HERE.



NOW THIS IS MY KIND OF GIRL.

BUT MY GUESS IS YOU'RE NOT FEELING ALL TOUCHIE-FEELIE ABOUT MISS W. HERE.

WHICH LEAVES US WITH ONE CHOICE LEFT...

...WHO SAYS
YOU GET TO REST
IN PEACE?!

HA HA HA
HA HA!

LET'S TAKE
A LOOK AT
YOUR BEAU.

AND SEE
IF HE HAD A
BRIS OR
NOT.

IF NOT, REST
ASSURED, I TOOK
AN ONLINE COURSE,
AND I'M CERTIFIED
TO PERFORM
ONE.

LEAVE
HIM ALONE,
OR I'LL
SHOOT!

WE BOTH
KNOW THAT'S A LIE,
CUPCAKE. YOU
CAN'T KILL ME. I
MADE YOU.

BUT I'M
WILLING TO OFFER
YOU A DEAL. YOU
DO SOMETHING
FOR ME...

...AND I'LL LEAVE
YOU AND YOUR DEAD
BOYFRIEND ALONE.
SCOUT'S HONOR.
WHADDYA SAY?

...GO
ON. I'M
LISTENIN'...

*FOR THE JOKER'S
FAVOR, CHECK OUT
BATMAN #13
-R.G.

AN HOUR LATER
BELLE REVE INFIRMARY.

WE ANALYZED THE GREEN RAIN AND BELIEVE IT TO BE A SYNTHETIC COUSIN TO THE JOKER'S GAS, MA'AM.

OVER THE YEARS, HARLEY PROBABLY BUILT A TOLERANCE TO THAT LUNATIC'S POISON, WHICH IS WHY SHE WAS UNAFFECTED BY IT.

JOKER'S BACK AND WANTED HIS GIRLFRIEND

JOKER HAD US DEAD TO RIGHTS. SO WHY NOT JUST KILL US?

HE'S BEEN OFF THE GRID FOR NEARLY A YEAR, SO HIS RETURN ISN'T COINCIDENTAL. HE'S PLANNING SOMETHING. SOMETHING BIGGER THAN US.

SHOULD WE ACTIVATE BETA TEAM TO FETCH HARLEY?

NEGATIVE

ACTIVATE THE MICRO BOMB IMPLANTED IN HER BODY?

NEGATIVE

BUT HARLEY QUINN HAS ESCAPED WITH THE JOKER. WE SHOULD DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT AT THE VERY LEAST CONTACT COMMISSIONER GORDON OF GOTHAM CITY AND LET HIM KNOW WHAT HAPPENED.

IF I WERE YOU, I'D BE MORE CONCERNED WITH HOW JOKER BROKE THROUGH OUR SECURITY, BEFORE YOU CALL COMMISSIONER GORDON FOR A JOB INTERVIEW.

BUT WHY WOULDN'T WE WANT TO ALERT OTHER LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES?

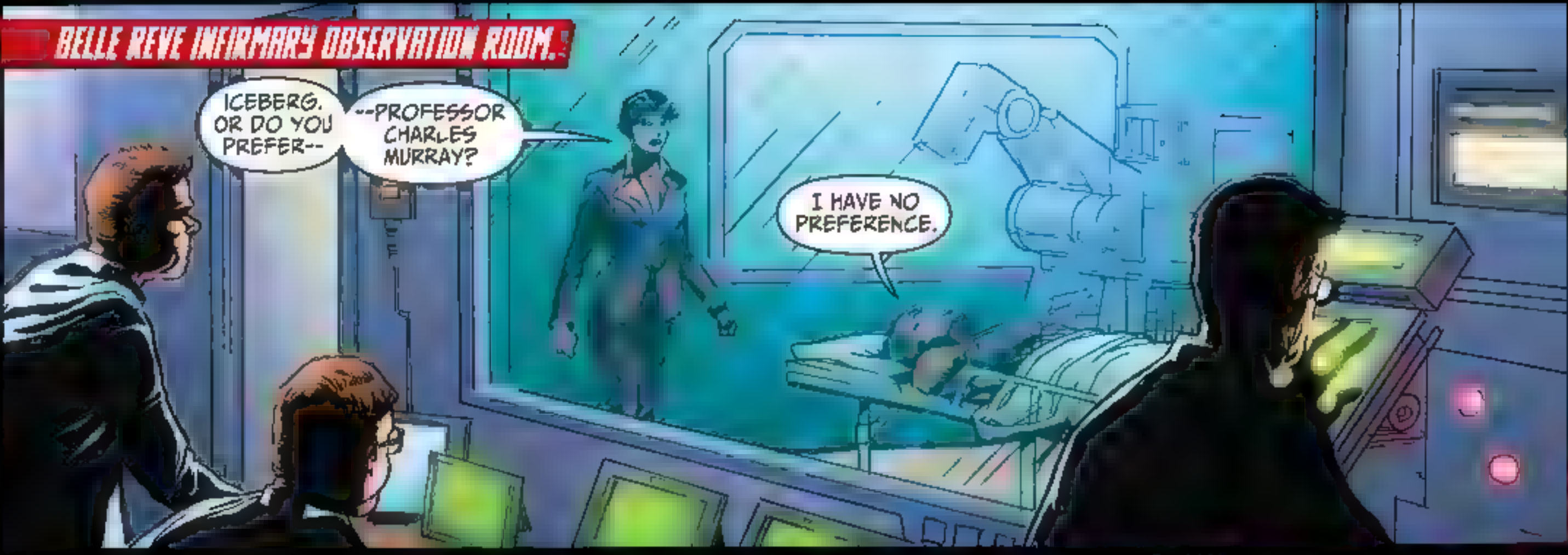
BECAUSE THAT WOULD EXPOSE US TO THE WORLD AND THEN WE WOULD CEASE TO EXIST. ANY MORE QUESTIONS?

...NO, MA'AM.

SAMSAARA PROJECT LAB
BELOW BELLE REVE



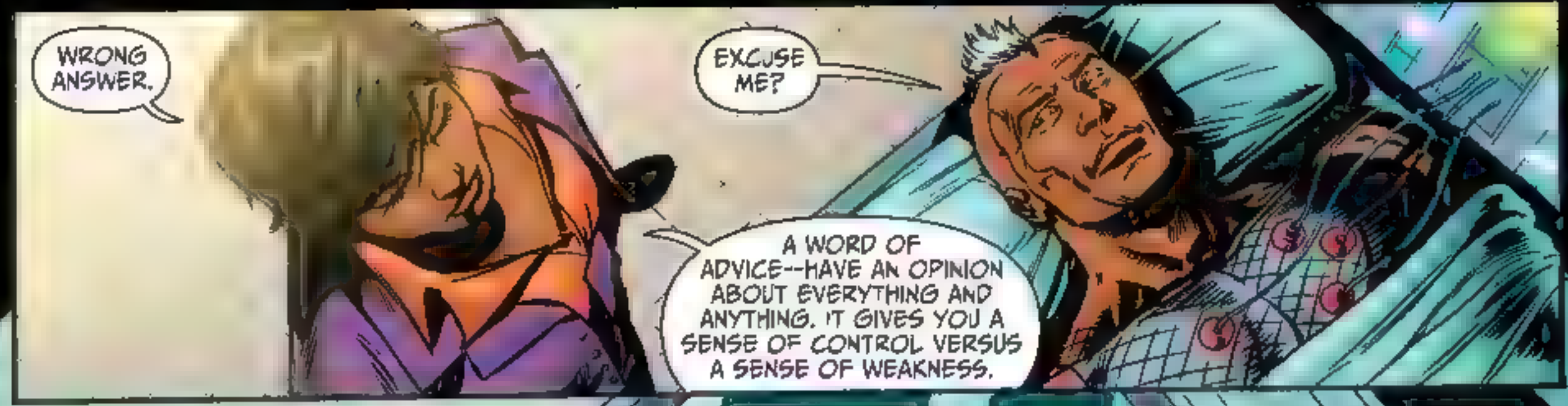
BELLE REVE INFIRMARY OBSERVATION ROOM.



ICEBERG.
OR DO YOU
PREFER--

--PROFESSOR
CHARLES
MURRAY?

I HAVE NO
PREFERENCE.



WRONG
ANSWER.

EXCUSE
ME?

A WORD OF
ADVICE--HAVE AN OPINION
ABOUT EVERYTHING AND
ANYTHING. IT GIVES YOU A
SENSE OF CONTROL VERSUS
A SENSE OF WEAKNESS.



SO IT'S A WEAKNESS NOT TO
CARE WHAT YOU CALL ME?

THAT OR LAZINESS,
BUT EITHER GIVES ME
THE SAME PERCEPTION OF
YOU. FOLLOWER. NOT
A LEADER.

I'M A MAN OF
SCIENCE, WALLER. I DO
NOT LEAD, BUT INSTEAD
WORK LIKE A BEE IN A
HIVE FOR A SIMILAR GOAL.
I'M WHAT YOU CALL A
TEAM PLAYER.

GOOD.
THEN YOU
CAN START BY
SHOWING ME
THE SHINY NEW
PRESENT
YOU GOT.



CONGRATS.
YOU GOT
YOUR ARM
BACK.

YOU CALL THIS A
FREAKING SOLUTION?
MY HAND IS PURE ICE.
SOMETHING IS HAPPENING
TO ME, AND I DON'T
KNOW WHAT!

WE'LL TAKE A
CLOSER LOOK AFTER
YOU'RE DEPROGRAMMED
FROM YOUR BASILISK
BRAINWASHING.

HOPE
YOU DIDN'T EAT
ANYTHING
LATELY.

KING SHARK'S
DEPROGRAMMING ROOM.

WEEEEEE

ENOUGH!
TURN IT
OFF!

IT
HURTS!

DEPROGRAMMING
PHASE THREE
COMPLETE.

I'M GOING
TO KILL YOU,
WALLER!

I THINK YOU
GOT BIGGER
FISH TO FRY THAN
WALLER, KING
SHARK.

WHAT
THE--?

I'M GOING TO SHOW YOU
THAT PLAYING WITH YOUR FOOD
IS NEVER A GOOD IDEA

...YO-YO? HOW
DID YOU GET BY
SECURITY?

JUST HERE
TO TELL YOU
I KNOW THE
TRUTH.

I KNOW
WHAT YOU'RE
DOING, AND WHY
YOU'RE REALLY
HERE.



EL DIABLO'S CELL.

IT'S WHY I'M HERE
AT BELLE REVE.



IT'S WHY I'M HERE
AT BELLE REVE.

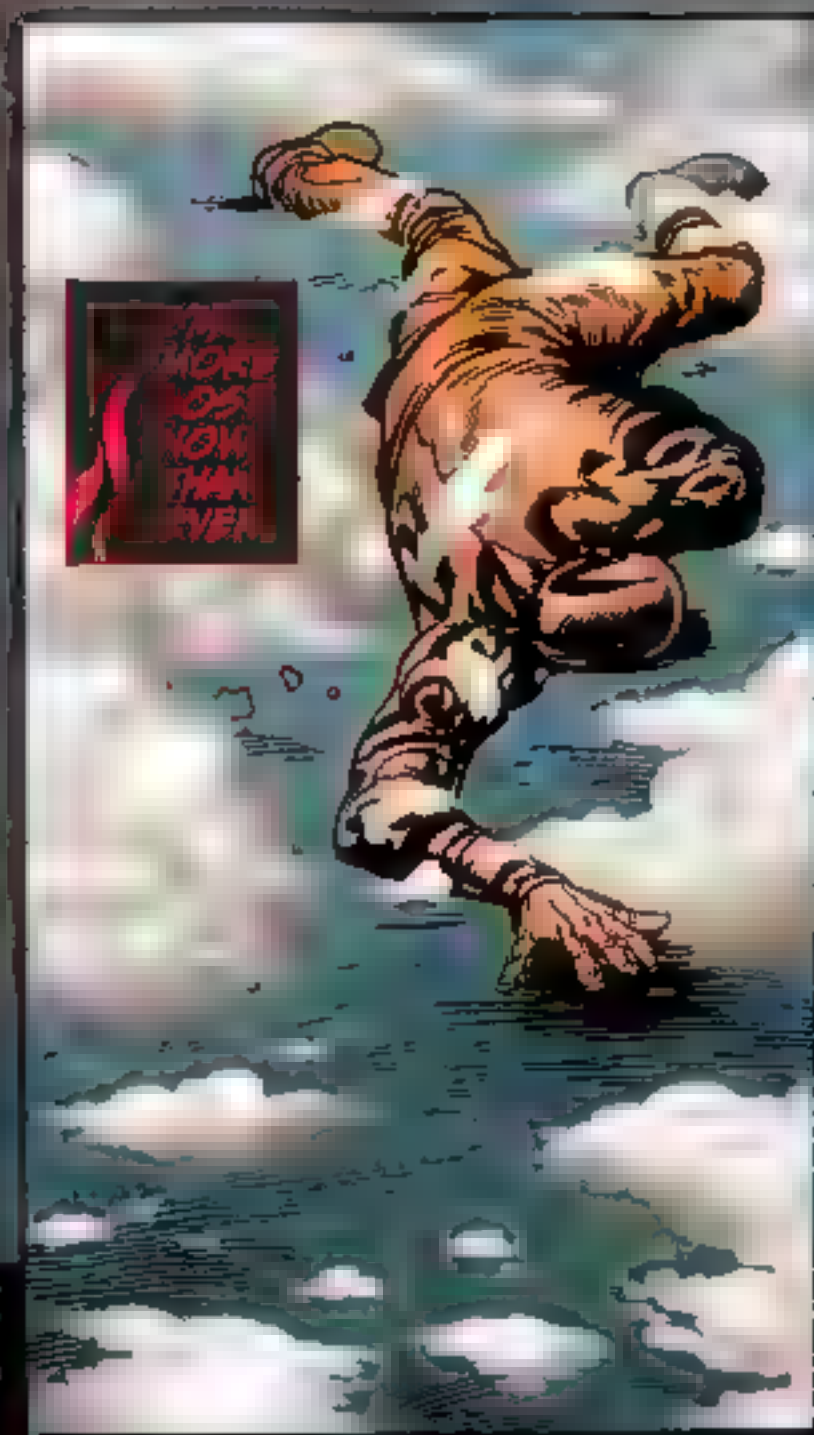


AT FIRST I THOUGHT
IT WAS A CURSE. TILL
HE FOUND ME. GAVE
ME HIS WORD. GAVE
ME A PURPOSE.

BUT IT WAS ALL A LIE.
THE WORK OF A
FALSE PROPHET! NOT
GOD, BUT INSTEAD~

--REGULUS!





AND READY
TO ACCEPT
THE TRUTH.

THESE DARK
POWERS COME
WITH A PRICE THAT
I NO LONGER CAN
AVOID PAYING.



SO, I WELCOME
YOU, LUCIFER, AND
YOUR HELLFIRE.



ARGHHH!

SOMEWHERE DEEP IN THE BOWELS OF BELLE REVE

WHERE DO YOU AND I EVEN BEGIN, DERRICK?

THE OTHERS I EXPECT THIS FROM, BUT NOT YOU...

...BLACK SPIDER.

YOU'RE AN EDUCATED MAN.

YOU HAD TO KNOW THAT REGULUS WAS LYING TO YOU.

A FATHER DOES ANYTHING TO SAVE HIS FAMILY.

EVEN BETRAY EVERYTHING HE BELIEVES.

BILL! THERE'S MORE TO THIS THAN YOU'RE ADMITTING.

LIKE WHAT?

LIKE YOU BELIEVE BASILISK IS RIGHT!

THEIR MESSAGE SPEAKS TO YOU!



.. I DO.

HOW CAN THAT BE?



THESE SUPERS ARE TOO POWERFUL. YOU AND I BOTH KNOW THAT SOONER OR LATER...

... POWER CORRUPTS.



AT FIRST, IT COMES SLOWLY.

THEY'LL TELL US THAT WE NEED POLICING, MONITORING, PROTECTION. OUR LAWS WILL BECOME THEIRS, AND WE'LL BE MADE TO FOLLOW.



AND THOSE WHO TRY TO STOP IT WILL DISAPPEAR OR DIE.

BUT IT'LL BE TOO LATE! WE'LL HAVE ALREADY LOST THE BATTLE!

UOHHHH!



YOU KNOW I'M RIGHT, AMANDA! AND ONLY YOU CAN SAVE JS FROM THEM!

LATER

ALL CHEMICAL PLANT

OKAY,
MR. J...I DID
WHAT YOU
ASKED.

TOLD
THE BAT
WHAT YOU
WANTED.*

*IF YOU DIDN'T PICK
UP BATMAN #14 THIS
WEEK, YOU'RE
MISSING OUT!
-RG

SO, I'M
GONNA GO
NOW.

'CUZ A
DEAL IS A
DEAL.

AND WHO'S AT
THE WHEEL THESE DAYS?
YOU, HARLEY--OR IS THAT THE
ANNOYING, BORING
DR. HARLEEN QUINZEL?

JUST
GOOD OL'
HARLEY.

AND HERE I
THOUGHT WE
DIDN'T HAVE ANY
SECRETS FROM ONE
ANOTHER.

A GIRL
ALWAYS HAS
A SECRET OR
TWO, MISTER
J.



THEN WHY
DON'T YOU HANG
OUT AND TELL ME A
FEW, HARLEY?!

ACK...
HRRK...

NEXT ISSUE:
LOVE AND HATE!



...his eyes and tell
yourself he's just a man.

Tell yourself he can't know the things
he says he does. He can't know your
fears. But he has *Alfred*. He has your
friend. And his eyes...

...you have studied the human eye.
There are six eye movements
that reveal motive, then
fifteen variations of each one.

On everyone else you
face--even the most hardened
criminals--the pupils contract or
expand depending on emotion.

Happiness, laughter,
affection. The pupils *open*.

Fear, anger, hatred,
the pupils *close*.

But not his. His pupils stay
fixed, tiny points of blackness,
the eyes of someone who
hates everything, everyone.

Eyes that let in no light,
that see through the darkness,
stare into you, each pupil
a tiny black pearl fixed in space.

A bullet coming at you.
Eyes that say he's
more than a man, eyes
that say he *knows* you.

No... you know what he is.
Tell yourself the truth.
He's just a man who fell
in a vat of chemical waste.
He's just a man...



...like you, made of bone
and tissue and blood.

THAT'S RIGHT,
BATSSS! I KNOW WHO
YOU ARE UNDER THAT LITTLE
MASK! AND MORE TO THE
POINT, ALL OF YOU OUT
THERE, LISTENING...

...LITTLE BIRDS
AND BATS, I KNOW
WHO ALL OF YOU ARE!
AND IN LESS THAN
THREE DAYS, YOU'LL BE
DEAD, DEAD, DEAD
BY BATMAN'S
HAND!

YOU KNOW
NOTHING,
JOKER.

YOU ARE
NOTHING--BUT
DEGENERATE
FILTH!

THERE'S THE
SPIRIT, HON! I SOOO
LOVE IT WHEN YOU
TALK DIRTY...

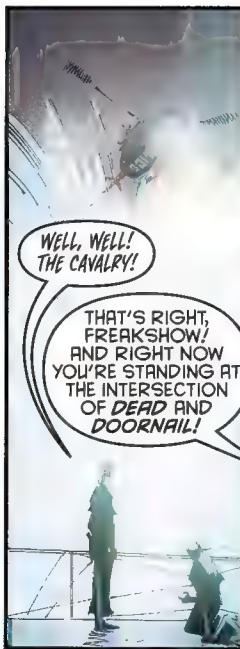
STAY
WHERE YOU
ARE!



I REPEAT,
STAY WHERE
YOU ARE!

LISTEN TO
ME, BULLOCK! GET
YOUR MEN OUT OF
HERE! NOW!

NOT
A CHANCE
IN HELL!



WELL, WELL!
THE CAVALRY!

THAT'S RIGHT,
FREAKSHOW!
AND RIGHT NOW
YOU'RE STANDING AT
THE INTERSECTION
OF DEAD AND
DOORNAIL!



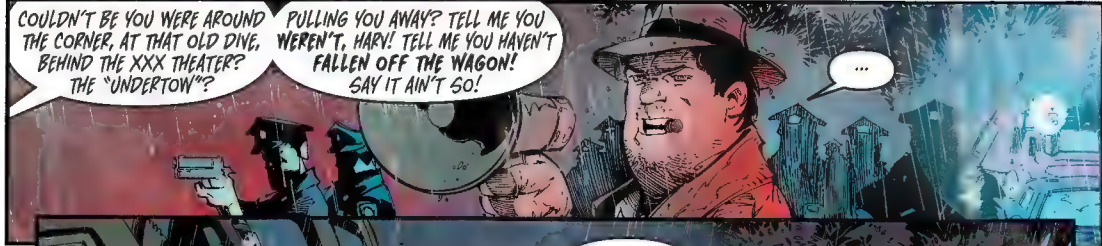
MEANING WE GOT
YOU IN ABOUT FIFTY
CROSSHAIRS!

OOOHH!
HARRY?
IS THAT YOU,
BIG BOY?

JUST GIVE
ME A REASON.
ONE REASON! I
PRAY TO GOD
YOU DO.

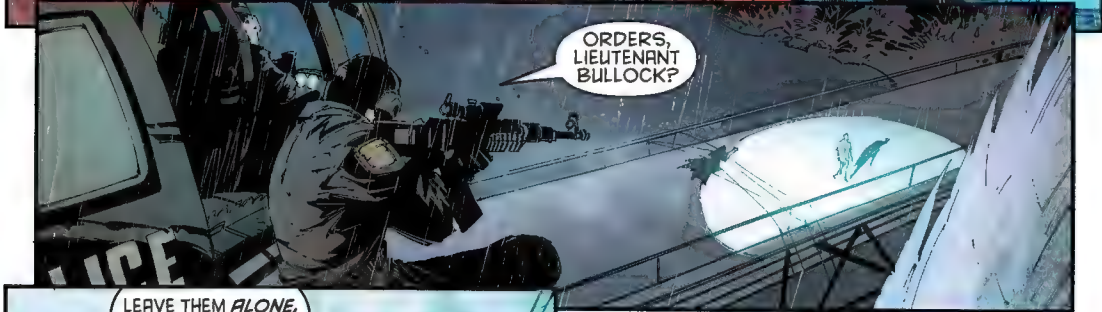


HAHAHA! HEY, HARRY--A QUESTION!
WHERE WERE YOU THE OTHER DAY,
WHILE I WAS BREAKING YOUR
FRIENDS' NECKS? I WAS
LOOKING FOR YOU!



COULDN'T BE YOU WERE AROUND
THE CORNER, AT THAT OLD DIVE,
BEHIND THE XXX THEATER?
THE "UNDERTOWN"?

PULLING YOU AWAY? TELL ME YOU
WEREN'T, HARRY! TELL ME YOU HAVEN'T
FALLEN OFF THE WAGON!
SAY IT AIN'T SO!



ORDERS,
LIEUTENANT
BULLOCK?



LEAVE THEM ALONE,
JOKER! THIS IS
BETWEEN YOU
AND ME.

EXACTLY MY
THOUGHTS! LET'S DRAW
THE CURTAINS, SHALL WE?
TIE A SOCK ON THE
DOOR, HEE HEE!



LIGHT 'EM UP,
FELLAS!



NO!

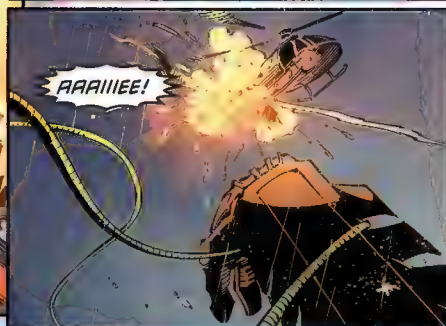


WHAT
THE--?!

LOOK OUT!
LOOK OUT!



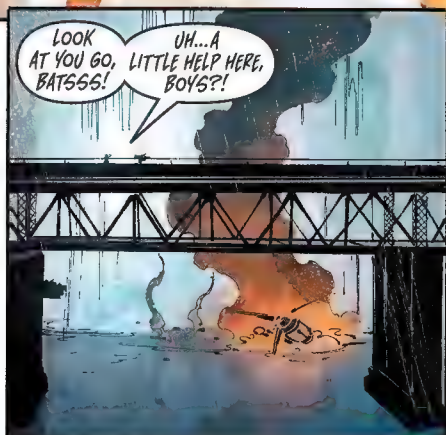
JOKER'S
GOT MEN IN THE
TREES! REPEAT!
IN THE--



AAAAIEEE!

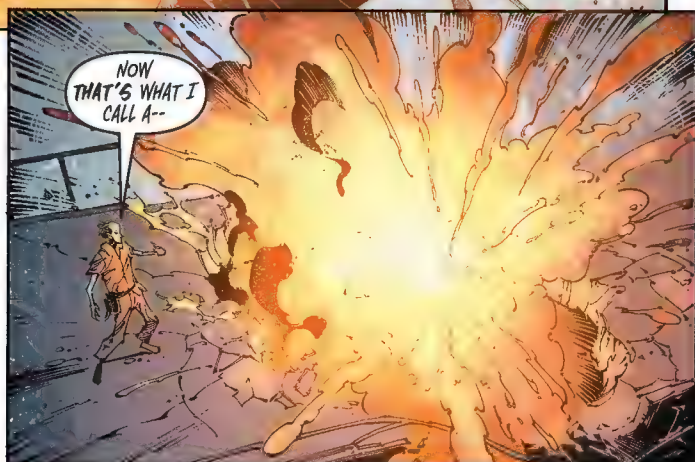


HHRRRAAA!



LOOK
AT YOU GO, LITTLE HELP HERE,
BATSSS!

UH...A
LITTLE HELP HERE,
BOYS?!



NOW
THAT'S WHAT I
CALL A--



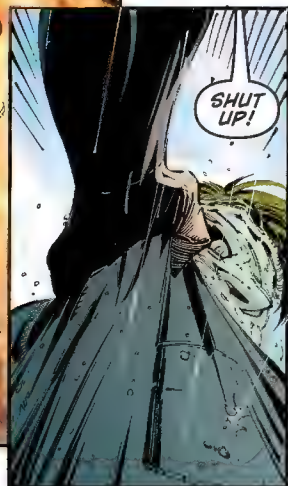
--WHA?!



IT'S OVER,
JOKER.

TELL ME WHERE
PENNYWORTH IS
AND I'LL ONLY HURT
YOU--A LOT.

HURT ME
=KOFFE BUT BATS,
AFTER EVERYTHING
I'VE DONE FOR YOU
THIS PAST--



SHUT
UP!



WHERE IS ALFRED PENNYWORTH? NOW!



HE'S AWAY, BATS! FAR AWAY, PART OF A SPECIAL DINNER FOR US! A CELEBRATION FOR YOU, ME AND YOUR LITTLE FAMILY!

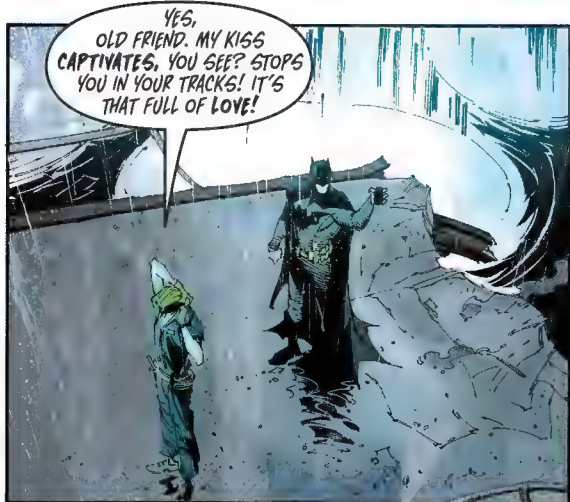
YOU'LL THANK ME WHEN YOU SEE IT, BATS! YOU WILL! YOU MIGHT EVEN KISS MY HAND!



AS I JUST KISSED YOURS, MY LORD, HEE, HEE!



TOXIN... NO...



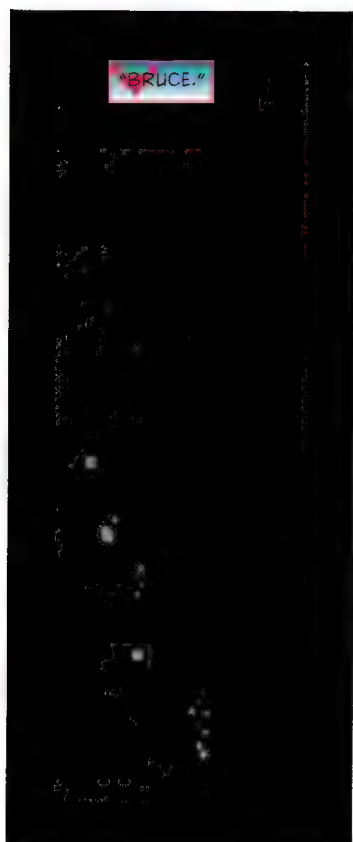
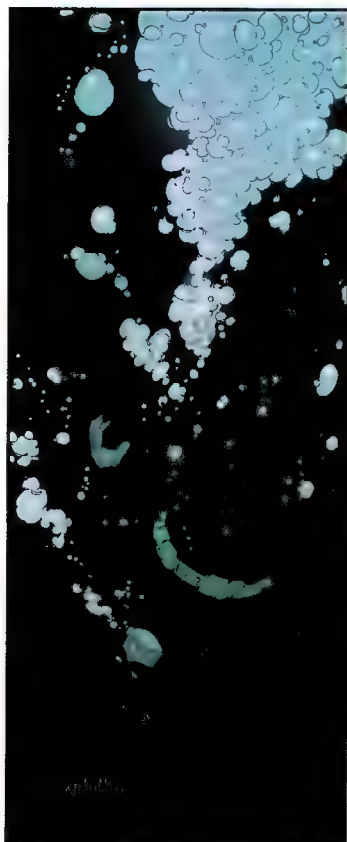
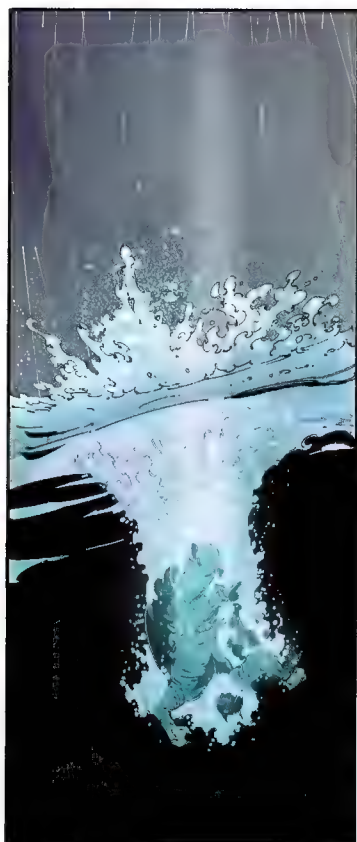
YES, OLD FRIEND. MY KISS CAPTIVATES, YOU SEE? STOPS YOU IN YOUR TRACKS! IT'S THAT FULL OF LOVE!

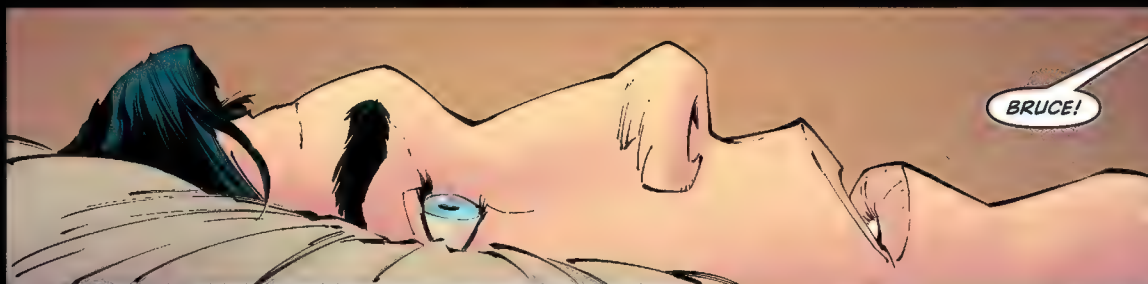


BESIDES, THERE'S NO WAY I'D LET YOU RUIN THE CELEBRATION I'VE PLANNED FOR YOU. NOT AFTER ALL THE HARD WORK I'VE PUT IN!

ALL THE BLOOD AND TEARS SHED TO MAKE IT HAPPEN--SHED BY OTHERS, OF COURSE, BUT THAT'S BESIDE THE POINT, HAHHAHA!

IT'LL BE SPECTACULAR. HERE, LET ME GIVE YOU YOUR INVITE!





BRUCE!

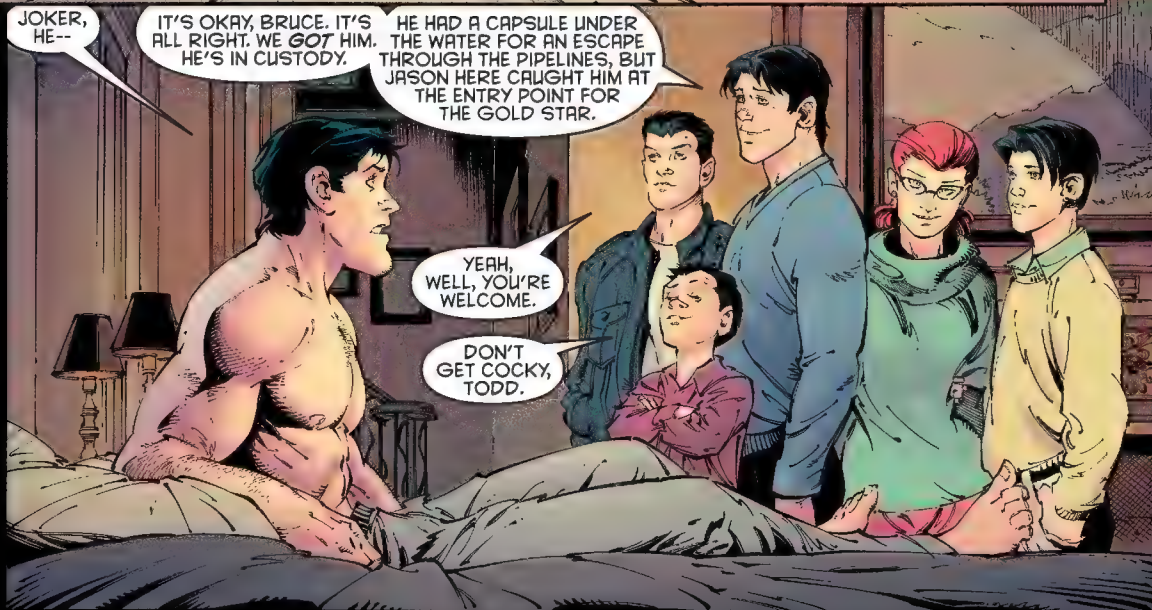
JOKER,
HE--

IT'S OKAY, BRUCE. IT'S
ALL RIGHT. WE GOT HIM.
HE'S IN CUSTODY.

HE HAD A CAPSULE UNDER
THE WATER FOR AN ESCAPE
THROUGH THE PIPELINES, BUT
JASON HERE CAUGHT HIM AT
THE ENTRY POINT FOR
THE GOLD STAR.

YEAH,
WELL, YOU'RE
WELCOME.

DON'T
GET COCKY,
TODD.

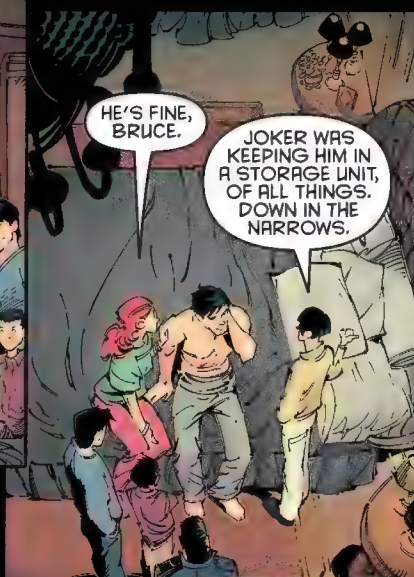


AND ALFRED?
ALFRED'S ALL
RIGHT?

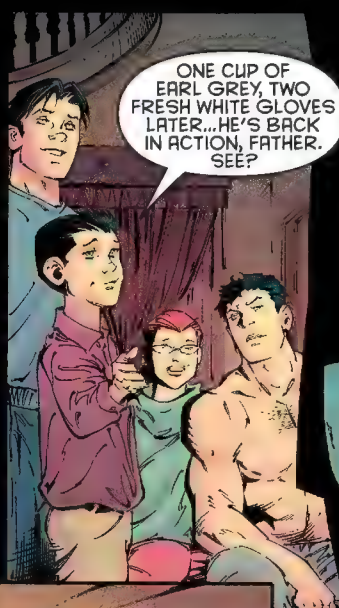


HE'S FINE,
BRUCE.

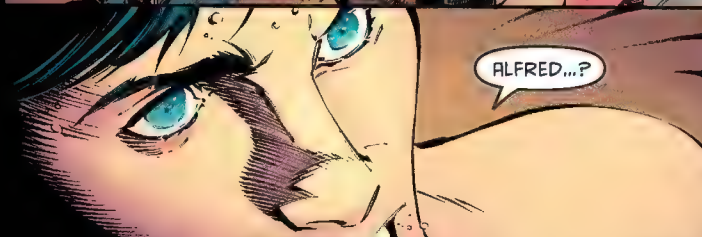
JOKER WAS
KEEPING HIM IN
A STORAGE UNIT,
OF ALL THINGS.
DOWN IN THE
NARROWS.

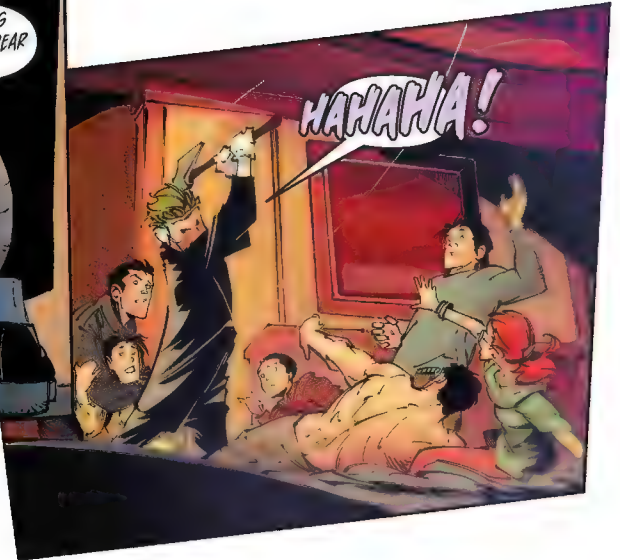
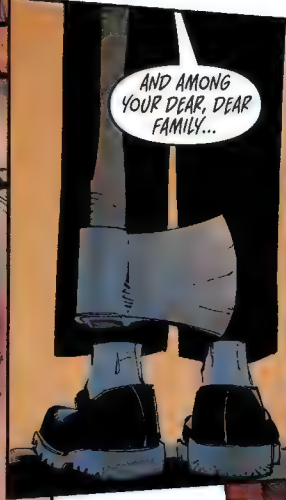
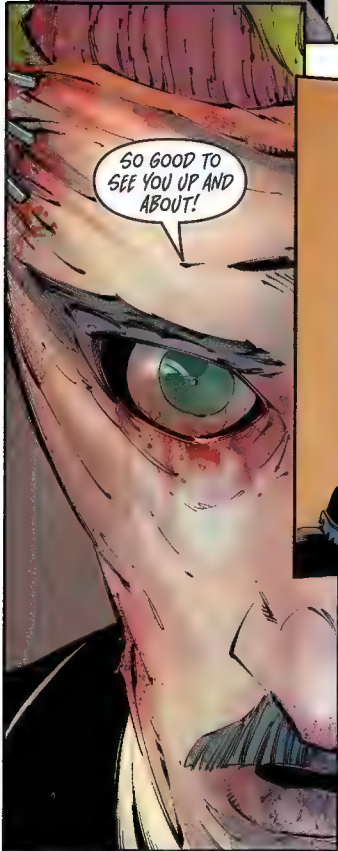


ONE CUP OF
EARL GREY, TWO
FRESH WHITE GLOVES
LATER...HE'S BACK
IN ACTION, FATHER.
SEE?



ALFRED...?











HOW
COULD YOU
NOT TELL
US?

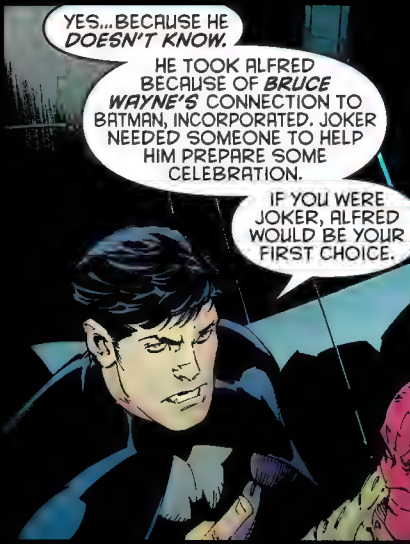


BECAUSE I
WAS AFRAID.

BECAUSE I
BELIEVED THAT YOU'D
LET YOUR *EMOTIONS*
GET THE BETTER OF YOU,
AND BY DOING SO,
YOU'D GIVE HIM THE
UPPER HAND.



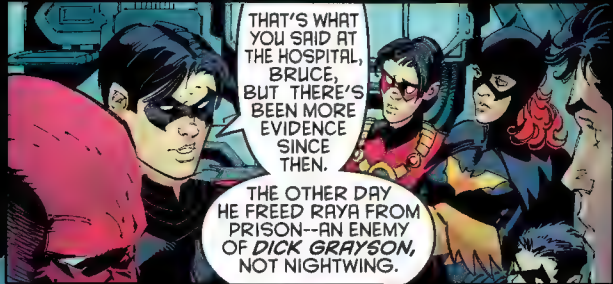
LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT.
TELLING US THAT HE TOOK
ALFRED, MEANING HE *KNOWS*
WHO WE ARE, WOULDN'T
HELP US UNDERSTAND
WHAT WE'RE UP
AGAINST?



YES... BECAUSE HE
DOESN'T KNOW.

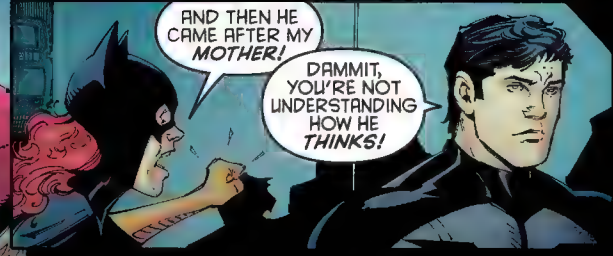
HE TOOK ALFRED
BECAUSE OF *BRUCE*
WAYNE'S CONNECTION TO
BATMAN, INCORPORATED. JOKER
NEEDED SOMEONE TO HELP
HIM PREPARE SOME
CELEBRATION.

IF YOU WERE
JOKER, ALFRED
WOULD BE YOUR
FIRST CHOICE.



THAT'S WHAT
YOU SAID AT
THE HOSPITAL,
BRUCE,
BUT THERE'S
BEEN MORE
EVIDENCE
SINCE
THEN.

THE OTHER DAY
HE FREED RAYA FROM
PRISON--AN ENEMY
OF *DICK GRAYSON*,
NOT NIGHTWING.



AND THEN HE
CAME AFTER MY
MOTHER!

DAMMIT,
YOU'RE NOT
UNDERSTANDING
HOW HE
THINKS!



THEN *EXPLAIN IT.*
I SAW THE FOOTAGE
FROM THE G.C.P.D. WHAT
DID HE MEAN, YOU
HAVE HIS *CALLING*
CARD?

AND WHAT'S
THE *SECRET* HE
WAS TALKING ABOUT,
THE ONE YOU'RE
KEEPING FROM US?
WHAT IS HE GETTING
AT, BRUCE?




GO ON.
NOW.



FATHER...



IT WAS A
LONG TIME
AGO...



"...SOON AFTER I BECAME BATMAN.
BEFORE ALL OF YOU. NOT
LONG AFTER MY FIRST BATTLE
WITH HIM AT THE RESERVOIR.

"HE USED A BLIMP
AND TRIED TO
GAS THE CITY."

YOU CAME! AND
HERE I WAS SO WORRIED
I MADE YOU UP! THAT YOU
WERE A FIGMENT OF MY
IMAGINATION! FAKE AS
THE TOOTH FAIRY!

NO,
BUT I'LL
TAKE SOME
TEETH.

"I KNOCKED HIM
INTO THE BAY."

"...I USED THE *BATBOAT* TO DRAG THE GAS CELL OUT INTO THE WATER BEFORE IT INFECTED ANYONE.

"THEN I RUSHED BACK TO LOOK FOR HIM. I SEARCHED THE BAY FOR HOURS, TRYING TO FIND SOME SIGN OF HIM, BUT THERE WAS *NOTHING*.

"AFTERWARD, THE WHOLE WAY BACK TO THE CAVE, I REMEMBER BEING SO ANGRY WITH MYSELF FOR NOT CATCHING HIM. I WAS ACTUALLY *SHAKING* WITH ANGER.

"I'D NEVER GOTTEN THAT WAY ABOUT AN UNFINISHED CASE BEFORE. *NEVER*. I WAS JUST STARTING TO UNDERSTAND HIM, YOU SEE. THE RESERVOIR GAVE ME A SENSE OF HIM. BUT NOW I WAS JUST STARTING TO UNDERSTAND..."⁴

"UNDERSTAND WHAT, BRUCE?"

"THAT HE WAS *DIFFERENT* FROM THE REST, TIM. THAT HE WAS ABOUT SOMETHING *ELSE*, AND WILLING TO *DO ANYTHING* TO MAKE HIS POINT."

"WHAT POINT?"

"HE'S CHAOS, BRUCE, WHAT ELSE--?"

"QUIET. GO TO SLEEP, BRUCE."

"AFTER SEARCHING THE BAY AND FINDING NOTHING, I TOOK THE BOAT BACK TO THE CAVE. I CAME IN THROUGH AN OPENING IN THE SOUTH PALISADES THAT I'VE SINCE CLOSED OFF.

"AFTER SURFACING, I WENT DIRECTLY UPSTAIRS TO THE MANOR AND SLEPT...

"...OR TRIED TO."

"BUT JUST HOURS LATER, I CAME DOWN TO THE CAVE AGAIN, TO REVISIT THE CASE. ALL OF IT, FROM THE SLIDE CONTAINING THE WASTE THAT MADE HIM, TO THE TOXIN FROM THE BLIMP."

"BUT WHEN I GOT DOWN TO THE CAVE, I FOUND SOMETHING..."

"FOUND WHAT, FATHER?"

"THERE IN THE WATER BESIDE THE BOAT."

"I FOUND HIS CARD."

THE CARD HANGING HERE IS A **REPLICA** OF THE ONE I FOUND IN THE WATER THAT MORNING.

THAT ONE, THE **ORIGINAL**, I TESTED EVERY WAY POSSIBLE. NO HOMING DEVICE, NO TOXIN, NOTHING. JUST A SIMPLE PLAYING CARD.



WHOA, **WHOA**. YOU'RE SAYING THE JOKER MAY HAVE GOTTEN **INTO THE CAVE!** THAT HE MIGHT HAVE SPENT A MORNING **LURKING AROUND** IN HERE?

NO, DICK. HE MUST HAVE ATTACHED THE CARD TO THE BOAT AFTER FALLING FROM THE BLIMP. HE LIKELY USED AN ADHESIVE THAT WAS WATER-SOLUBLE AND WASHED AWAY.

BUT THAT'S A **THEORY**, BRUCE.

AND, IF HE **DID** MAKE IT IN--

HE **DIDN'T**. I'M JUST EXPLAINING WHAT HE'S REFERRING TO BY HIS CARD. I'M TRYING TO EXPLAIN THE GAME HE'S PLAYING.

BUT IF HE **DID** MAKE IT IN, HE'D KNOW YOU WERE **BRUCE WAYNE**.

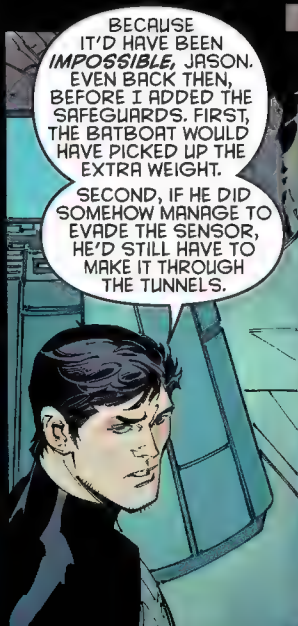
AND IF HE FIGURED THAT OUT, IT'D BE EASY ENOUGH BY ASSOCIATION, OVER TIME, TO FIGURE OUT WHO **ALL** OF US ARE.

HOW COULD YOU HAVE **KEPT** THIS FROM US?



HE DIDN'T GET INTO THE CAVE, BARBARA. I'M **SURE** OF IT.

ALL EARS, BRUCE. WHY?



BECAUSE IT'D HAVE BEEN **IMPOSSIBLE**, JASON. EVEN BACK THEN, BEFORE I ADDED THE SAFEGUARDS. FIRST, THE BATBOAT WOULD HAVE PICKED UP THE EXTRA WEIGHT.

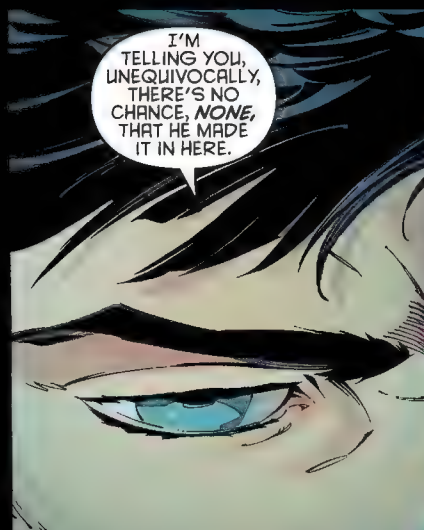
SECOND, IF HE DID SOMEHOW MANAGE TO EVADE THE SENSOR, HE'D STILL HAVE TO MAKE IT THROUGH THE TUNNELS.



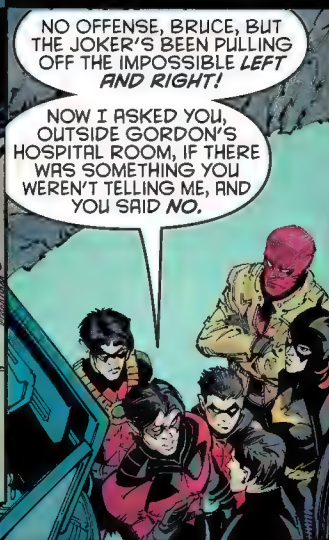
MEANING HE'D HAVE TO HANG ONTO THE BOAT WHILE IT TRAVELED ALMOST FIVE MILES **UNDERWATER**, AT SPEEDS OF NEARLY **FIFTY MILES AN HOUR**.

NONE OF US COULD DO THAT. NOT ME, NOT YOU.

THIRD, IF HE MADE IT IN, THERE'D BE **TRACES** OF HIM. EVIDENCE. FROM THE SENSORS. FROM THE ALARMS. THERE'D BE A RECORD.



I'M TELLING YOU, UNEQUIVOCALLY, THERE'S NO CHANCE, **NONE**, THAT HE MADE IT IN HERE.



NO OFFENSE, BRUCE, BUT THE JOKER'S BEEN PULLING OFF THE IMPOSSIBLE **LEFT AND RIGHT!**

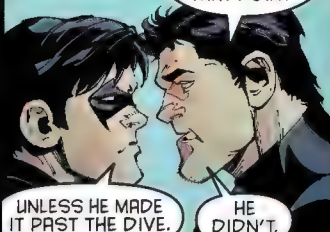
NOW I ASKED YOU, OUTSIDE GORDON'S HOSPITAL ROOM, IF THERE WAS SOMETHING YOU WEREN'T TELLING ME, AND YOU SAID **NO**.

BECAUSE THERE **WASN'T**, DAMMIT. JOKER DID NOT GET IN HERE.

LIKE I SAID, THE CLOSEST HE COULD HAVE GOTTEN IS THE CAVE JUNCTURE NEAR MIRAGANI FALLS, WHERE THE BOAT DIVES. THAT'S **MILES** FROM HERE.

IT'S STILL IN THE CAVE SYSTEM.

YES, AND THERE ARE A **HUNDRED HOMES** THE TUNNEL SYSTEM COULD LEAD TO FROM THAT POINT.



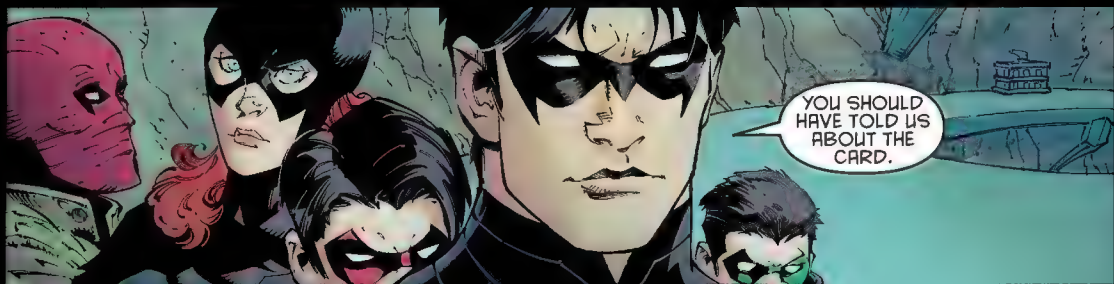
UNLESS HE MADE IT PAST THE DIVE.

HE DIDN'T.



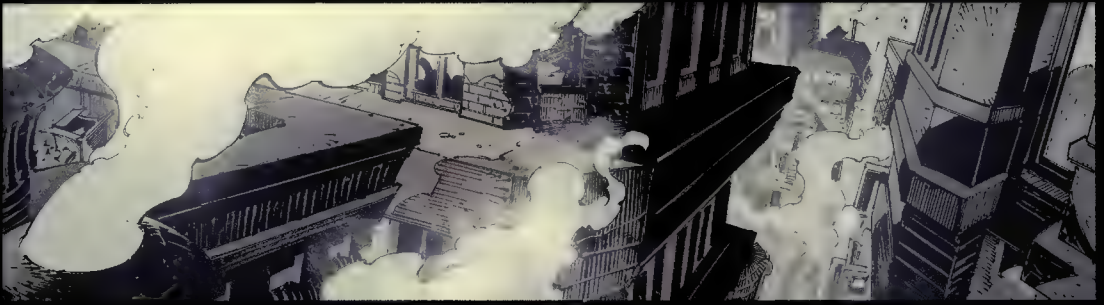
HE DOESN'T KNOW WHO WE ARE. HE **DOESN'T CARE**. DON'T YOU SEE? HE'S PLAYING US AGAINST EACH OTHER. THIS--RIGHT HERE--IS WHAT HE'S AFTER!

WELL, IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE DOING HIS WORK FOR HIM, BRUCE.



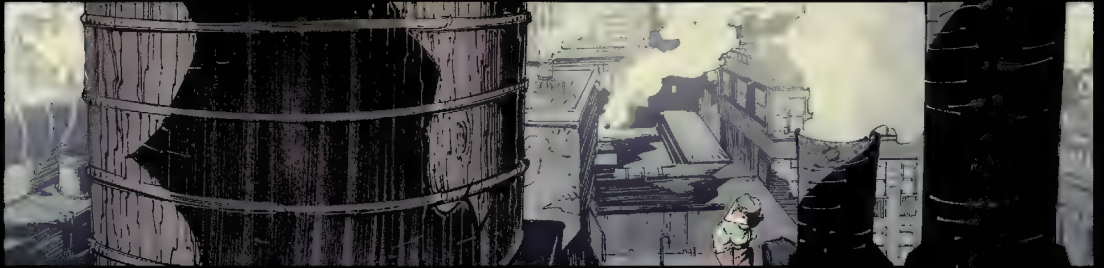
YOU SHOULD HAVE TOLD US ABOUT THE CARD.





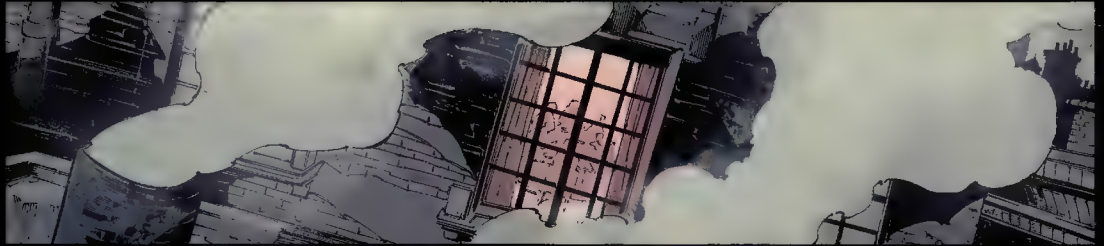
Even planning for a year, plotting and watching, but to pull off everything he intends, he needs help.

At the reservoir, he used a cellular signal in his remote to contact men hiding in the trees.



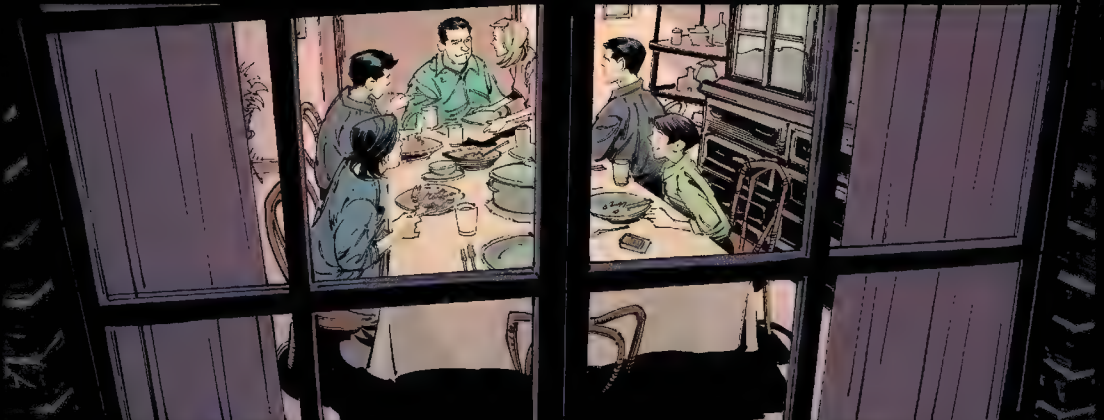
Those men, the help he's using, is where I can get to him...

...get to him before he gets to them. Before he does whatever he's planning to do to Alfred. It's the only way, beating to him his punchline. Ruining his joke.

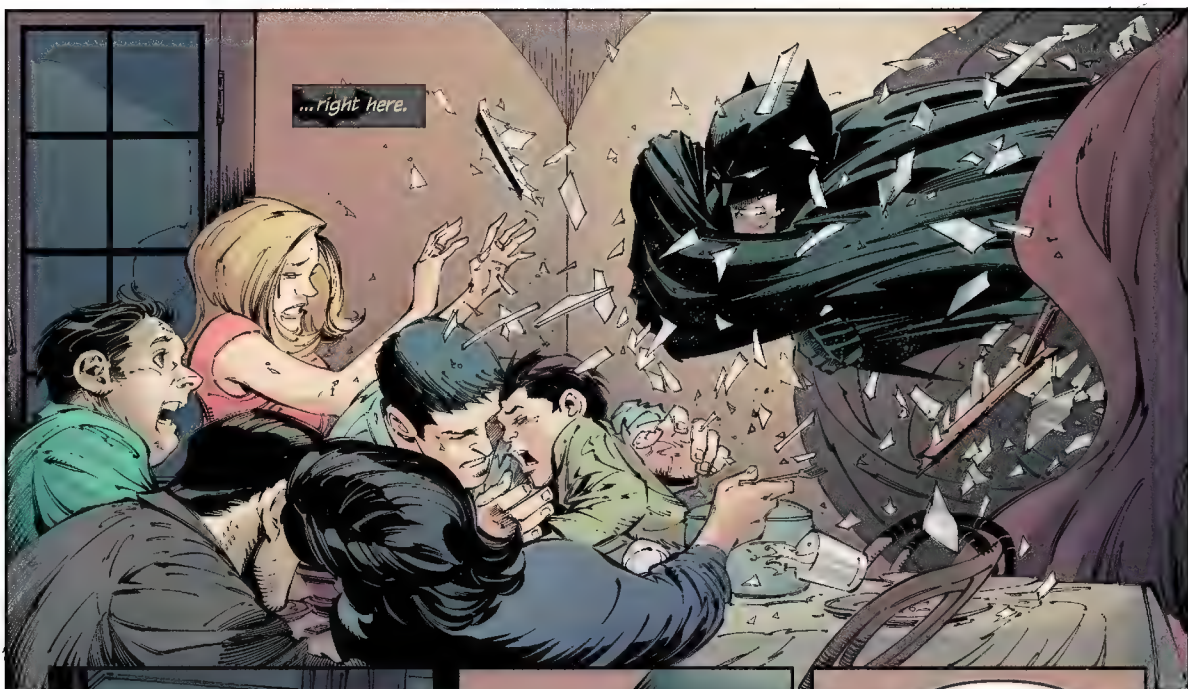


I traced the cellular signal Joker sent to a pre-paid cell phone number. A burn phone. Purchased with cash at a Gotham electronics shop nine days ago.

The phone is untraceable, but traffic light footage of the corner shows a man exiting the shop at the time of the purchase.



A man identified by the computer as "Dylan McDyre." Forty-five years old. Widowed. Four children. And McDyre resides...



...right here.



DAD...?

DON'T BE AFRAID. YOUR FATHER AND I JUST NEED TO HAVE A LITTLE TALK.



DON'T WE?



I-I HAD TO. HE SAID HE'D KILL MY FAMILY. HE'S BEEN W-WATCHING US, BATMAN. PLEASE. WATCHING US ALL FOR A WEEK.



YOU AND WHO ELSE?



ALL OF US FROM WORK...

"...ALL THE GUARDS
FROM ARKHAM."

Dylan McDyre. A nine-year
veteran officer of Arkham
Asylum. I assumed he and a
few others had taken up with
Joker, out of greed or fear.

But the story he told
me, there in his dining
room...it's something
worse than I expected.

A story about an asylum held
hostage by a madman. A *Killer*
who sent the guards home
every night, the ones with
families, forced them to
pretend everything was fine.

To pretend that the Asylum
was business as usual, while
the whole time, day by day, the
inside was being torn apart.

...transferred into what
exactly, McDyre wasn't sure.

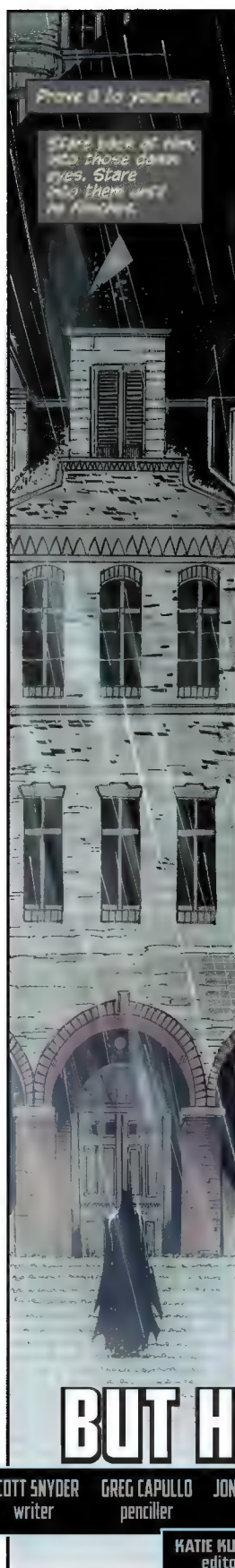
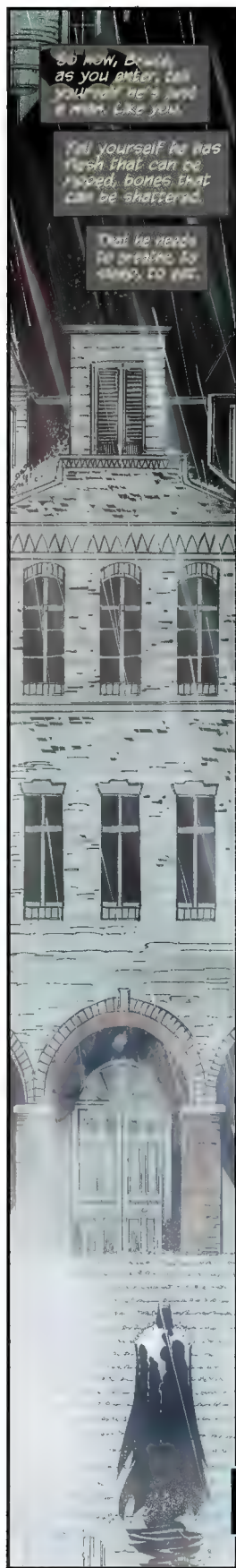
No one was, he said,
but he saw glimpses
down the hall.

See more of current brought
in generators and cable,
mortar and syringe and paint.

We heard the screaming, too, the
bloody towels come down the hall
in a wheelbarrow. Heard bodies
going down the incinerator chute.

The wailing, the crying, then
and then the thud. The sobs
and small and laughter from
below, always the laughter...

Whatever he was changing it into,"
McDyre said to me, "he said it was for
you, Batman. He said he was making it
your castle, a place to come home to."



DC COMICS presents BATMAN in
DEATH OF THE FAMILY
BUT HERE'S THE KICKER

SCOTT SNYDER
writer

GREG CAPULLO
penciller

JONATHAN GLAPION
inker

FED PLASCENCIA
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RICHARD STARKINGS and
COMICRAFT'S JIMMY BETANCOURT
lettering

KATIE HUBERT
editor

MIKE MARTS
editor

GREG CAPULLO &
FED PLASCENCIA
main and variant
covers

BATMAN
created by
BOB KANE

NEXT:
CASTLE OF
CARDS!

RED LIGHT, GREEN LIGHT

STARRING
JOKER
& THE RIDDLER

SCOTT
SNYDER &
JAMES
TYNION IV
WRITERS
JOCK
ARTWORK
DAVE BARON
COLORS
TAYLOR
ESPPOSITO
LETTERS
KATIE
KUBERT
ASSISTANT
EDITOR
MIKE
MART'S
EDITOR

LET'S SEE IF
YOU CAN GET THIS
ONE...WHAT'S AN ELEVEN-
LETTER WORD FOR
SELF-DISGRACE?



STUMPED? OH,
CHARLES...I THOUGHT YOU
MIGHT BE. NIGHT AFTER NIGHT I
GIVE YOU THESE LITTLE CHANCES
TO PROVE YOURSELF, BUT YOU
ALWAYS DISAPPOINT!

I PROMISE YOU KNOW
THIS ONE. DEGRADATION.
ALIENATION. THAT TIME IN
GRADE SCHOOL YOU SPILLED
MILK ON THE GIRL YOU
SPENT YOUR NIGHTS
DREAMING OF.

NOT TO
MENTION EVERY
NIGHT YOU'RE
LOCKED IN HERE
WITH **ME.**



DO YOU GIVE
UP? THE WORD
IS **HUMILIATION**. I
THOUGHT IT WOULD
BE APPROPRIATE.

YOU REALIZE I'VE
GIVEN UP ON THE PAPER
CROSSWORDS, DON'T
YOU, CHARLES? THEY WERE
BORING ME TO **DEATH**.
I'M ONLY DOING THIS
FOR YOU!

AND WHAT
FOR? ARE YOU
EVEN **LISTENING**
TO ME?

→SOB←



...SAID
HE'D RIP OUT MY
GIRL'S THROAT, MR.
RIDDLER...SAID
HE'D MAKE ME
EAT IT...

FRESH
FRESH
FRESH



WHO SAID THAT?

OH NO, CHUCK! GET OVER HERE! WE NEED HELP

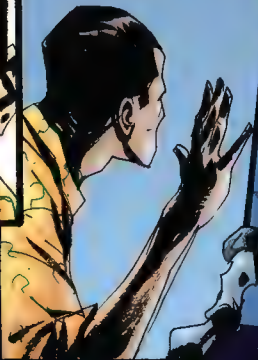
SLAM

OH GOD IT'S CRUSHING ME!

KEEP MARCHING, BOYS! NOT MUCH FARTHER!



OH, MY...HOW CURIOUS.



STEADY... STEADY...



I'M LOSING MY GRIP!



OH GOD, MY LEGS!

STEVE!

NO NO NO NO NO!



THIS IS
SUPPOSED TO BE
SPECIAL. DON'T YOU
UNDERSTAND?!

HOW CAN THIS
BEAUTY BE EXPECTED TO
PERFORM TONIGHT IF YOU'RE
DROPPING HER ALL OVER
THE PLACE?!



THIS HORSE
IS RUINED.

BLAM



GET THE NEXT ONE FROM OUT
FRONT. AND DO IT RIGHT THIS
TIME. CAN'T HAVE A NICE PARTY
WITHOUT HORSES. NOW,
CAAAAAN WE?

BUT...
WHAT ABOUT
STEVE?




BLAM

STEVE IS
RUINED, TOO.
NOW GO!

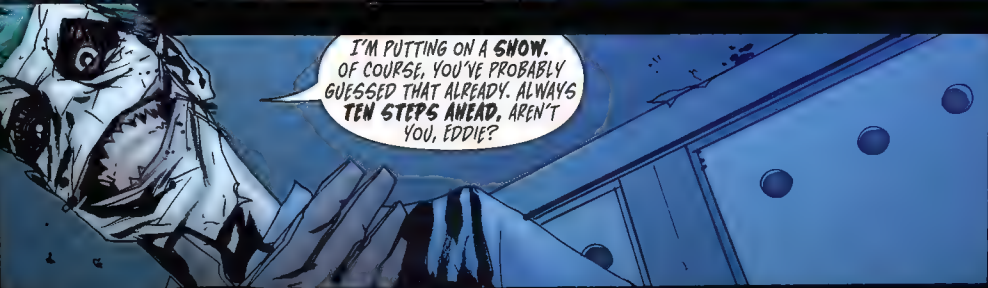


OH! HEY,
EDDIE! DIDN'T SEE
YOU THERE. GLAD YOU
COULD MAKE IT!



BEING INCARCERATED
CERTAINLY HAS ITS
UPSIDES.


HAHAHA! THAT'S MY EDDIE!
WHY DON'T YOU COME OUT
OF THAT CELL? THERE'S
SO MUCH TO DO! SO
MUCH TO SAY!



I'M PUTTING ON A **SNOW**.
OF COURSE, YOU'VE PROBABLY
GUESSED THAT ALREADY. ALWAYS
TEN STEPS AHEAD, AREN'T
YOU, EDDIE?




HMM...
YES, OF
COURSE.



C'MON NOW.
WHERE'S THE FUN
IN THAT?

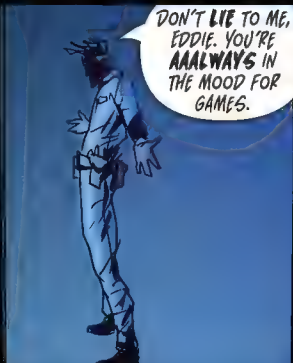
YOU'VE
BEEN LOCKED IN
THERE FOR **AGES**! YOU'RE
THE RIDDLER FOR PETE'S
SAKE! DON'T PRETEND
YOU DIDN'T FIGURE A DOZEN
WAYS OUT ON YOUR
FIRST NIGHT. I KNOW
YOU BETTER THAN
THAT!

YOU'LL FIND THE
KEY CARD TO THE
DOOR ATTACHED TO
THAT POOR GUARD
YOU JUST GUNNED
DOWN.

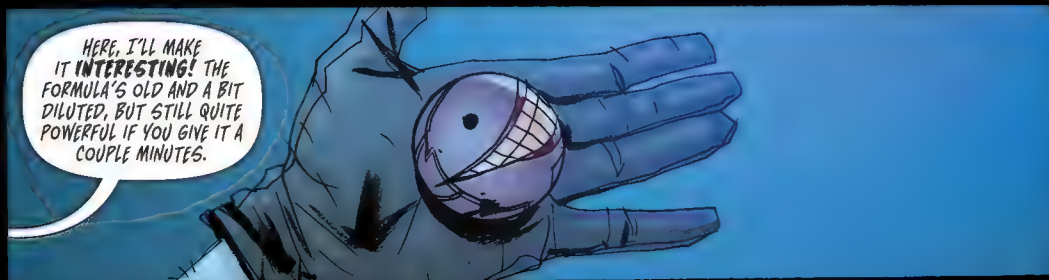


YOU CLEARLY WANT
ME **INVOLVED** IN
WHATEVER YOU'VE
GOT PLANNED OUT
THERE, SO OPEN
THE DOOR.

I'M NOT IN
THE MOOD FOR
YOUR **GAMES**,
JOKER.



DON'T LIE TO ME,
EDDIE. YOU'RE
AAALWAYS IN
THE MOOD FOR
GAMES.



NOBODY CAN PUSH HIM TO HIS LIMIT LIKE YOU CAN. NOBODY ELSE IS A FRACTION AS SMART AS OUR GLORIOUS BAT-KING!

IF YOU DIDN'T SEND OUT YOUR LITTLE CLUES, HE'D NEVER CATCH YOU! BUT THAT'S THE WHOLE POINT, ISN'T IT? YOU SEE THE BIGGER GAME... JUST LIKE MEEEE!



YOU KEEP HIS MIND... HIS MOST TERRIBLE **WEAPON**... GOOD AND **SHARP**. AND YOU DO IT BETTER THAN ANY OF US. YOU ASK THE QUESTIONS HE CAN'T ANSWER.

SO WHAT THE **HELL** ARE YOU DOING IN HERE, EDDIE? THERE'S STILL GOOD WORK TO BE DONE!

IT'S TIME YOU GOT BACK IN YOUR **KING'S SERVICE**! IT'S TIME YOU GOT BACK TO SHARPENING HIS SWORD.

YOU'RE THE **MASTER AT ARMS** IN THIS WICKED CITY, EDDIE. YOU MAKE BATMAN SMARTER. BETTER. MORE DANGEROUS.

I CAN'T BEAR TO SEE YOU WASTING AWAY IN HERE. I'D RATHER SEE YOU **DEAD**. AND BY THE LOOK OF THE CLOCK... YOU'RE ALMOST THERE!

DING

THERE WERE FORTY-SIX WAYS OUT OF THAT CELL, JOKER.

ONLY FOUR THAT MET YOUR TIME REQUIREMENT. THE EASIEST WOULD HAVE BEEN TO HIT THE GLASS PERFECTLY AT THE SHATTERING POINT. I OPTED FOR **METHOD THREE**.

REWIRING THE DOOR THROUGH THE HOLE IN THE WALL I CARVED SIX WEEKS AGO. I WOULD HAVE LEFT SOONER, BUT THEY KEPT CHANGING THE GUARD SHIFTS ON ME. I WAS WAITING UNTIL THE PATTERN PRESENTED ITSELF.

>koff<
YOU'RE A BASTARD, YOU KNOW THAT, RIGHT?

I'M QUITE A BIT MORE THAN THAT, EDDIE.

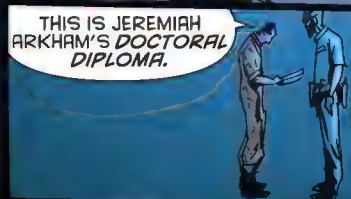
HAHAHAHAHA



BUT SO ARE YOU!
THAT'S THE POINT, DON'T
YOU SEE? BUT QUICKLY
NOW...WE MUST FINISH
GETTING READY.



CARE TO TAKE
A GUESS AT WHAT
I HAVE IN **STORE**?
I KNOW YOU'RE
CURIOUS.




THIS IS JEREMIAH
ARKHAM'S **DOCTORAL**
DIPLOMA.



WELL, I HAD TO DRAW
ON **SOMETHING**! IT LOOKED
SO LONELY UP THERE, DUSTY
IN ITS FRAME. I THOUGHT I'D
PUT IT TO BETTER USE
THAN HE **EVER** DID.

I'M SURE HE
APPRECIATES IT...
WHEREVER HE IS. ONE OF
THE **CLOSETS** I THINK...
BUT NO MATTER.
TAKE A LOOK...




I THINK I
CAN GUESS WHAT
YOU HAVE PLANNED,
JOKER. I'VE KNOWN
YOU LONG ENO--

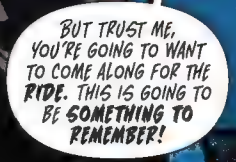


...

I DON'T...I
DON'T UNDER-
STAND.



IT'S NOT FOR
YOU TO UNDERSTAND,
MY BOY! THIS IS
JUST FOR HIM
AND ME.



BUT TRUST ME,
YOU'RE GOING TO WANT
TO COME ALONG FOR THE
RIDE. THIS IS GOING TO
BE **SOMETHING TO**
REMEMBER!



TO BE
CONTINUED...



THEY
POINTED
THEIR
FINGERS AT
HIM--

--PLAYED
THE BLAME GAME
AS IF MISTAKES
NEVER HAPPEN
ON *THEIR* WATCH.



SELFISH
INGRATES--
FORGETTING EVERY-
THING FATHER'S DONE
FOR THEM--
FORGETTING WHO
THE ENEMY REALLY
IS EVEN FOR JUST
A MOMENT.

I'M THE
ONLY ONE WHO
TOOK HIS SIDE
AGAINST THE
"FAMILY."

I'M THE
ONLY ONE
WHO STOOD
BY HIM.



AND
WHAT DOES
HE TELL ME
AGAIN?

"PLEASE
SIT THIS ONE
OUT."

"WITH
ALFRED GONE
SOMEONE NEEDS TO BE
AT THE CAVE COMMAND
POST--GLUED TO THE
KEYBOARDS AND
MONITORS."



SURE, AFTER
EVERYTHING WE'VE
BEEN THROUGH I *GET*
IT--HE'S MY FATHER AND
HE WANTS TO PROTECT
ME FROM THE BIG,
BAD JOKER.

BUT IF
ANYBODY NEEDS
PROTECTION, IT'S
THE WING, REDS
AND GIRLS.

LITTLE BIG MAN

DEATH OF THE FAMILY

PETER J. TOMASI - Writer

PATRICK GLEASON - Penciller

MICK GRAY - Inker

JOHN KALISZ - Colorist

CARLOS M. MANGUAL - Letterer

GREG CAPULLO AND EDO PLASCENCIA - Cover

RICKEY PURDIN - Assistant Editor

RACHEL GLUCKSTERN - Editor

Batman Created By Bob Kane

SO WHAT
DO YOU THINK
I SHOULD DO,
TITUS?

RRRF
RRUFF
RRRF

I
AGREE.

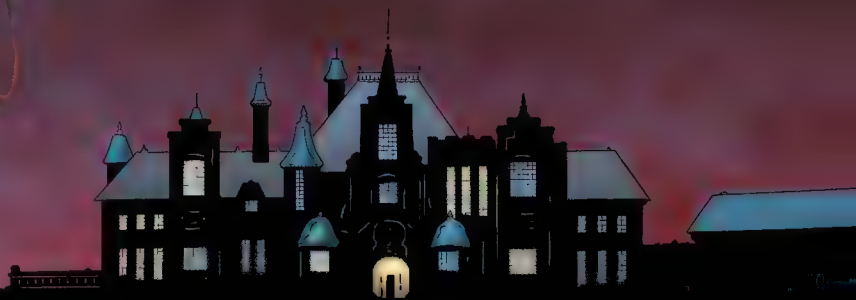
MY FATHER
CAN'T AFFORD TO
FOCUS ONLY ON ONE
PERSON--WITH THE
JOKER OUT THERE, THE
ENTIRE CITY NEEDS HIS
ATTENTION.

WE
HAVE TO FIND
ALFRED...



"...AND THE FIRST PLACE
TO START IS THE SCENE OF
ALFRED'S ABDUCTION."

WAYNE MANDR.



WE'VE COME UP
EMPTY ON TIRE
TREADS AND
ANY PHYSICAL
EVIDENCE,
TITUS.

RRFF
RRFF

NO
FINGERPRINTS,
HAIRS, OR EVEN
SHOES WITH
DISCERNIBLE
SOLES...

...THE
JOKER'S A
TWISTED
FREAK, NOT A
GHOST...

SNURFF
SNURFF

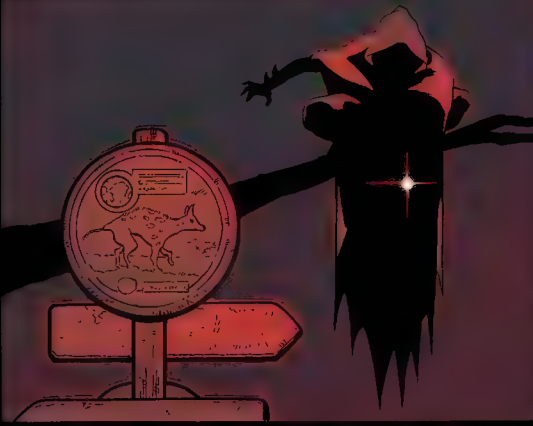


...HE HAD
TO LEAVE
SOMETHING
BEHIND.

..URINE SAMPLE IS
A MATCH FROM THE
HYAENIDAE FAMILY OF
SUBORDER FELIFORMS
OF THE CARNIVORA.

AND
THERE'S
ONLY ONE
PLACE THEY
KEEP
THOSE...

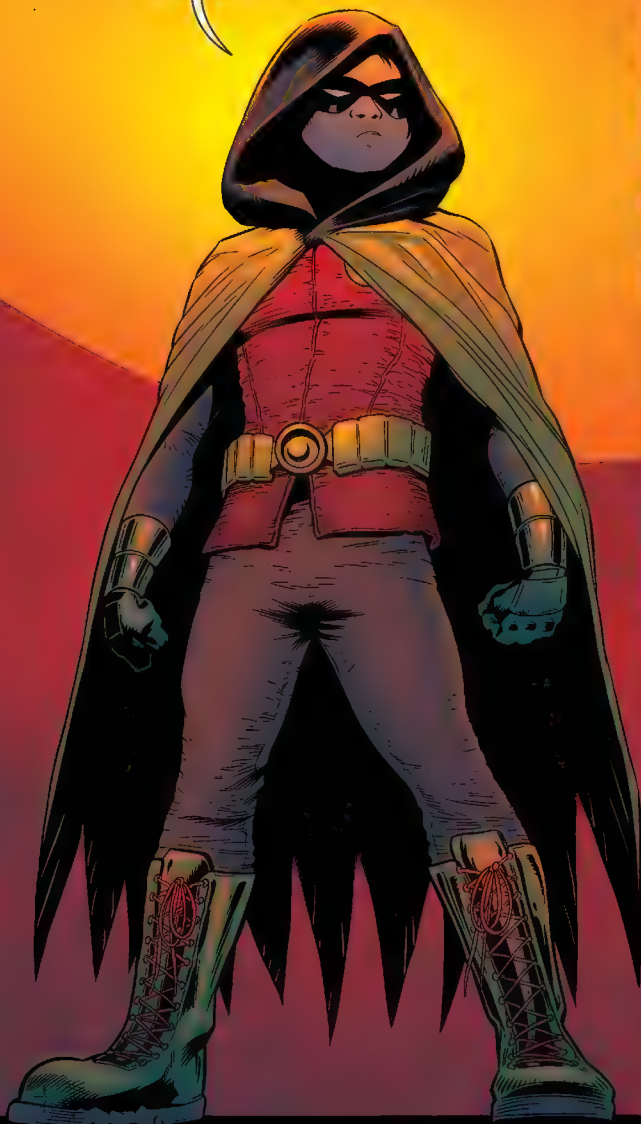


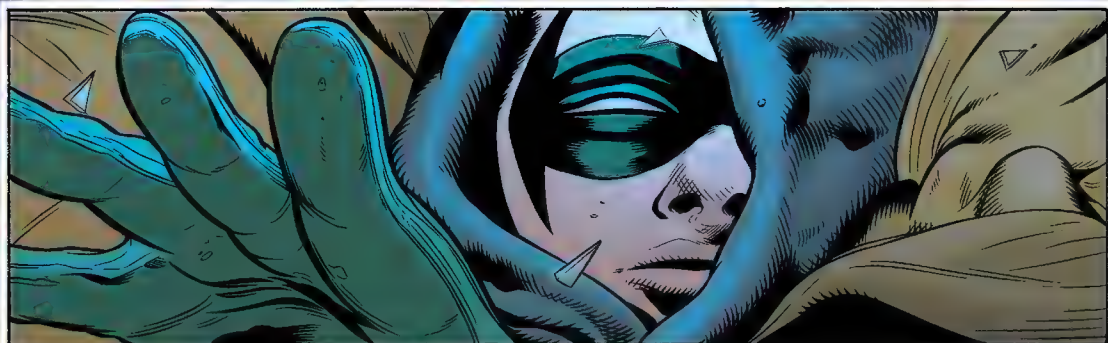






I
HATE THE
ZOO.







--MY
SWEET BIRD
OF YOUTH!



КРАКККККК

AH, THE
ACT OF BEING
BORN...

...NO
WONDER WE
DON'T REMEMBER
ANYTHING ABOUT
IT...

...BECAUSE
IT'S NOT ALL IT'S
CRACKED UP
TO BE!



...PENNYWORTH...

...WHERE
IS HE...?

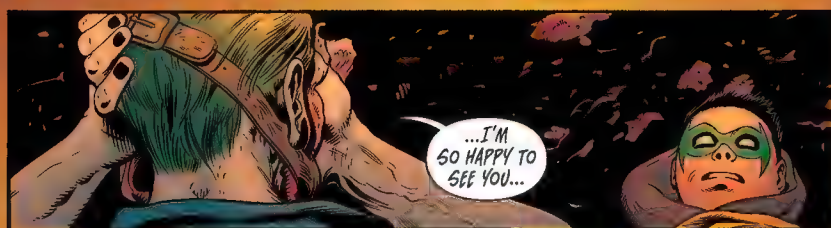
THOUGHT
THE HYENAS WERE
HAVING THE BUTLER
FOR DINNER,
HMM?

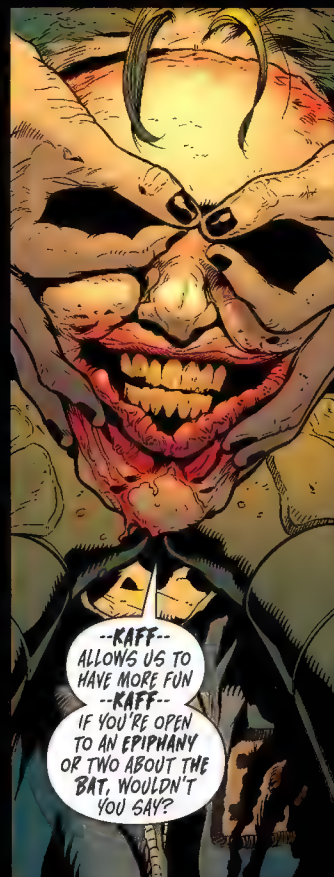
HAHA
HAHAHA
HAHA

FUMP



ALLEY
OOP!





FLY,
ROBIN,
FLY!

WHA--

CHANK

THE SATURN
CLUB--YOU HAD
PEOPLE WILLING
TO EAT EACH
OTHER, YOU SICK
BASTARD--WHAT
WAS THE
POINT?!

TO KEEP OUR
FUN-LOVING CITY ON
EDGE, OF COURSE. LITTLE
WORD OF MOUTH IN ALL THE
WRONG PLACES GOES
A LONG WAY.

I PRESENTED A
SIMPLE SCENARIO--IF YOU
WANT TO LIVE FOREVER, DO YOU
WANT ME TO SHOW YOU HOW? AND
THOSE GLORIOUS, UNBALANCED
DENIZENS OF GOTHAM--WHO I'M
SURE I DON'T HAVE TO TELL YOU
NUMBER QUITE A FEW--ANSWERED
WITH A RESOUNDING "YES."

THE
SHEEP DON'T
WANT TO
DIE...

...AND WILL
DO WHATEVER THEY'RE
TOLD TO STAVE OFF THE
INEVITABLE DECAY OF
THEIR SHELLS...

...EVEN
IF IT MEANS
DEVOURING EACH
OTHER WITH A DASH
OF TABASCO.

WHAT
I LIKE ABOUT YOUNG
ROBINS IS THAT
DISCRETE YET REPEATED
HIGH NOTE WHEN YOU
SCREAM.

IT'S
GOING TO BE
MUSIC TO MY
EARS, DARLING
BOY.



AND YOUR SHRILL SCREAM IS GOING TO BE MUSIC TO *MINE* WHEN I MAKE YOU TELL ME WHERE PENNYWORTH IS!

JEEVES FEELS SO MUCH MORE THAN JUST AN ENGLISH GREY, HMM? I CAN SEE IT IN YOUR EYES. BATS WAS ALL CRAZED TO FIND HIM, TOO.

WHY, YOU'VE GROWN ACCUSTOMED TO HIS FACE--



--OR WHAT I IMAGINE IS LEFT OF IT.

HERE, WATCH THE VIDEO FOR YOURSELF.

IF YOU THINK BEING BLINDFOLDED INTIMIDATES ME--

HAHAHA!
YOU THINK YOU'RE...
HAHAHA! YOU'RE NOT BLINDFOLDED, GOOD SIR.

...BUT...

I BURNED YOUR EYES WITH AMMONIA.

HERE, I'LL DO IT AGAIN FOR FUNNN!

AIIEEEEE



I'M GOING TO BREAK A SOLEMN PROMISE FOR THAT.

I'M GOING TO KILL YOU.

OOH, I'M 5000 SCARED.

YOU WILL BE.

ALL YOUR
TALK OF KILLING
IS MAKING ME
QUEASY.

THAT'S WAY
DOWN ON THE LIST
OF THINGS TO DO WHEN
THERE'S SO MUCH MORE
IMPORTANT STUFF TO
CHAT ABOUT.

I'VE GOT
NOTHING TO
SAY TO HELP YOU
MANIPULATE ME,
CLOWN.

CLOWNCLOWN
CLOWNCLOWNCLOWN--
THAT'S ALWAYS BEEN THE
MISCONCEPTION!

I MEAN, HAVE
I EVER MADE YOU LAUGH
WITHOUT A LITTLE HELP--OR A
PHARMACEUTICAL PUSH?
I DON'T THINK SO!

BUT THE BAT--
YES--I MADE HIM LAUGH
WITHOUT THE PUSH--JUST
ONCE--IN THE GAUDY RAIN--
BEFORE THE CHERRY
TOPS CAME--

--WE LAUGHED
AND LAUGHED AS THE
MERRY-GO-ROUND SQUEALED
AND THE PAINTED WOODEN
HORSES GLARED AT US--
AH, GOOD TIMES...

IF YOUR
IDEA OF GOOD
TIMES IS
PARALYZING
AN INNOCENT
GIRL--

WHY DO YOU
KEEP INSISTING ON
GOING NEGATIVE WHEN
I'M IN A GLASS-16-
HALF-FULL STATE
OF MIND!

BOKX

AND I'M
IN A GLASS-
SMASHED-IN-YOUR-
DISGUSTING-FACE
STATE OF
MIND!

YOU'RE
A WARPED
LITTLE BIRD--
SOOOO
DIFFERENT FROM
THE OTHERS...

I LIKE
THAT.

BUT I WANT
YOU TO THINK
OF ME AS MORE
OF A BEACON--A
LIGHTHOUSE HELPING
YOU THROUGH A
STORM OF THE
SOUL.



I'M HERE TO
BRING ILLUMINATION TO
YOUR LIFE--A LITTLE
CLARITY.

PSYCHOS
DON'T HAVE
MUCH USE FOR
CLARITY.



LOOK
AT THAT, BOY,
WHAT IS THAT,
HMM?

MY
SHADOW.



NO, NO, NO,
IT'S DARKNESS--IT'S
LIKE THAT ECLIPSE THE
OTHER DAY, DON'T YOU SEE?
THE BAT IS THE SUN--
THE FIERY STAR--



--YOU AND
THE OTHERS ARE THE
MOON--BLOCKING HIS
LIGHT--HE CAN'T SHINE ON
ME AND ME ON HIM IF
YOU'RE ALL IN THE WAY
OF HIS RAY!



YOU KNOW IT'S TRUE,
YOU BELIEVE IT JUST
AS MUCH AS I
DO.

I BET YOU
THINK THE OTHERS
ARE LEECHES AND YOU'RE
TONGO TO HIS LONE
RANGER, WATSON TO
HIS HOLMES!

YOU
DON'T KNOW
WHAT THE
HELL YOU'RE
TALKING
ABOUT...

...AND WHO
THE HELL ARE
TONGO AND
THE LONE
RANGER?



OW--
HELP, BATMAN,
I HAVE MAGGOTS
IN MY EYES!

HOLD
STILL, ROBIN,
I'LL EAT
THEM!



OH, I BET ONE NIGHT
AMONG THE GARGOYLES
HE SAID, "ONE DAY, YOU,
TOO, CAN BE THE BEST
BATMAN EVER."

WE'LL GUESS
WHAT--NO YOU
CAN'T--THERE'S ONLY
ONE BATMAN AND HE
DOESN'T NEED YOU--
ANY OF YOU--

DON'T YOU SEE--YOU'RE
THE BATMAN'S BURDEN,
HE'S TIRED OF HOLDING
ALL OF YOU--PROPPING
YOU UP!

CAN YOU
IMAGINE THE PRESSURE
OF HAVING A TEN-YEAR-OLD
NIPPING AT YOUR HEELS
WHILE HE DOES HIS DARK
KNIGHT THING--

THE BATMAN I KNOW
AND LOVE HAS MORE PEZ IN
THE DISPENSER--BUT YOU ALL
KEEP PUSHING HIS HEAD BACK,
REACHING DOWN HIS NECK AND
TAKING MORE THAN YOU DESERVE
UNTIL ONE DAY HE'LL BE
EMPTY AND HAVE NO PEZ
LEFT TO GIVE POOR
OL' ME.

--YOU'RE STATIC
INTERFERENCE--WHITE
NOISE THAT KEEPS
HIM UNFOCUSED--
UNBALANCED!

FROM WHERE
I'M HANGING,
YOU'RE THE ONLY
ONE WHO'S
UNBALANCED.

HE WANTS TO
TURN AND RUN BUT--HE CAN'T
BECAUSE HE'S LET HIS SENSE OF
ACCOUNTABILITY GET IN THE WAY
OF BEING THE BEST HE CAN BE!



AND I
CAN'T LET THAT
HAPPEN.
I WON'T.

MY DUTY
IS TO REMOVE THAT
ACCOUNTABILITY.



KLIK

LOOK AT
THE TIME, WHAT
A HORRIBLE
HOST--

--HOW
RUDE OF
ME--

--YOU
MUST BE
HUNGRY!



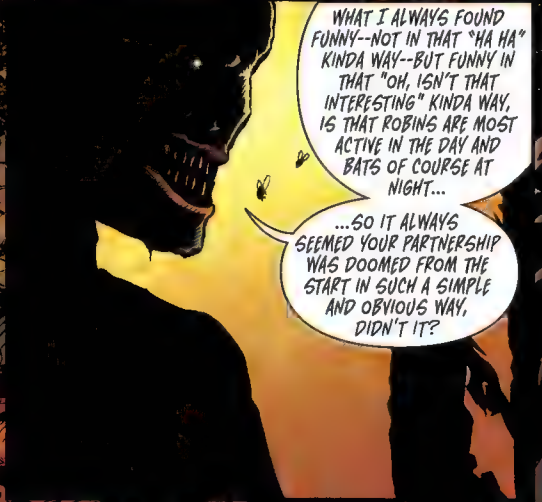
SKLATCH



YOU SICK,
DEMENTED
BASTARD--

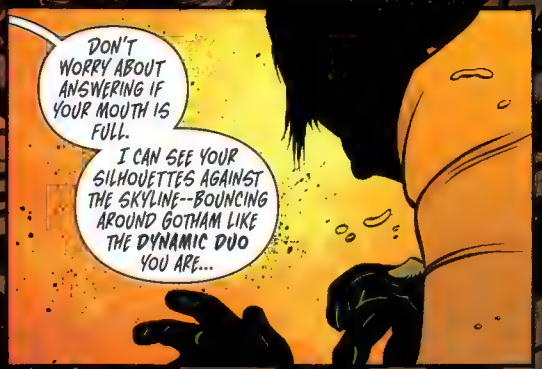


EAT UP--
PLENTY OF IRON AND
PROTEIN FOR A ROBIN
JUST OUT OF THE
NEST AND YEARNING
TO FLY.



WHAT I ALWAYS FOUND
FUNNY--NOT IN THAT "HA HA"
KINDA WAY--BUT FUNNY IN
THAT "OH, ISN'T THAT
INTERESTING" KINDA WAY,
IS THAT ROBINS ARE MOST
ACTIVE IN THE DAY AND
BATS OF COURSE AT
NIGHT...

...SO IT ALWAYS
SEEMED YOUR PARTNERSHIP
WAS DOOMED FROM THE
START IN SUCH A SIMPLE
AND OBVIOUS WAY,
DIDN'T IT?



DON'T
WORRY ABOUT
ANSWERING IF
YOUR MOUTH IS
FULL.

I CAN SEE YOUR
SILHOUETTES AGAINST
THE SKYLINE--BOUNCING
AROUND GOTHAM LIKE
THE DYNAMIC DUO
YOU ARE...

ONLY THE BEST
BEETLES, GRUBS,
EARTHWORMS, FRUITS,
BERRIES, CATERPILLARS
AND GRASSHOPPERS
FROM THE GOOD OL'
U.S. OF A.

...HOW COULD YOU NOT BE EXPECTED TO LOOK UP TO HIM LIKE A FATHER FIGURE DOING WHAT YOU BOTH DO.

AND I'M SURE A YOUNG BOY OF YOUR TENDER AGE HAS ONLY ONE TRUE FEAR--THAT IN YOUR CASE--KEEPS YOU AWAKE DURING THE DAY.

RRAGH!

IF YOU ACTUALLY KNEW ANYTHING ABOUT ME, YOU'D KNOW I'M NOT AFRAID OF ANYTHING, JOKER, ESPECIALLY YOU!

ME? YOU'RE A SILLY DILLY--YOU'RE NOT FOLLOWING THE BOUNCING BALL HERE.

I KNOW ALL THERE IS TO KNOW. IT'S AS PLAIN AS THE SMILE ON MY FACE.

WAIT FOR IT... DRUM ROLL... AAAAANNND...

...ROBIN'S GREATEST FEAR IS BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR BATMAN'S DEATH, AND BATMAN'S GREATEST FEAR IS BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR ROBIN'S DEATH!



I HAD TO LISTEN TO YOUR CHAOS THEORY ONCE UPON A TIME WHEN MY MOUTH AND EARS WERE FILLED WITH BILE AND BLOOD...

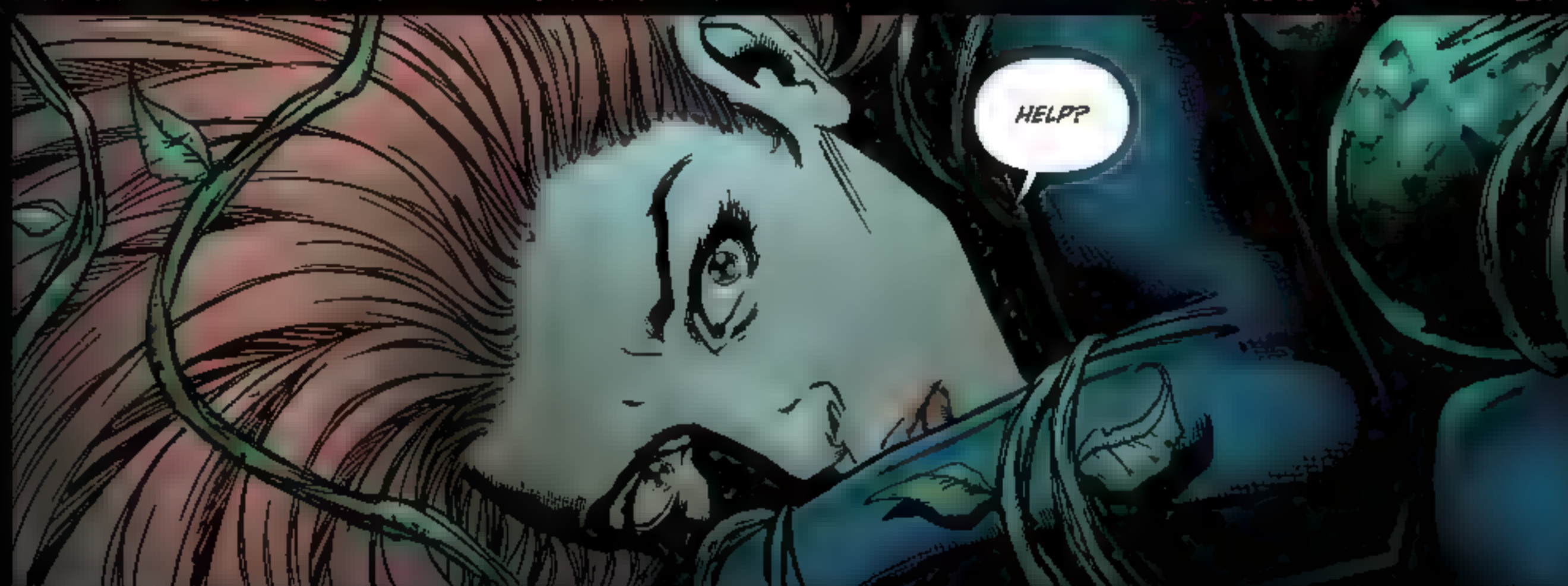
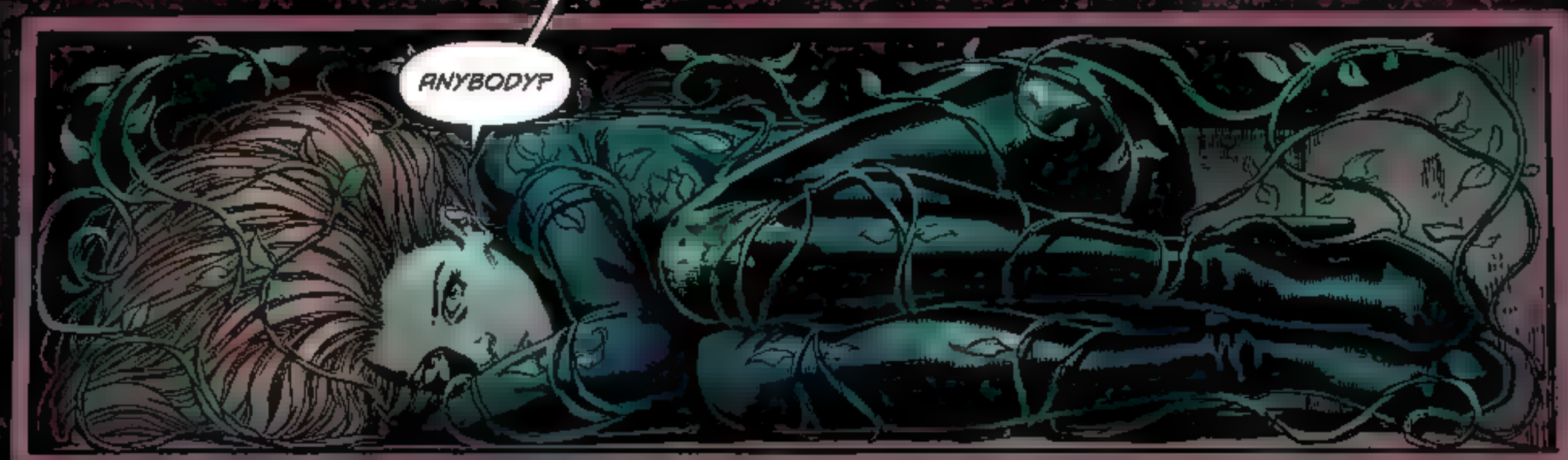
...NOW, YOU GET TO LISTEN TO MY CHAOS THEORY WITH YOUR MOUTH FILLED WITH GRUBS AND WORMS, ROBBY.

VMMMMMM

CHAOS
IS HAVING TO BEAT
BATMAN TO DEATH
BEFORE HE BEATS
YOU!

CHAOS
IS HAVING TO BEAT
BATMAN TO DEATH
BEFORE HE BEATS
YOU!

NEXT:
FATHER
VERSUS
SON!



LAS VEGAS.
ONE MONTH EARLIER...

I-I N-NOW
PRONOUNCE YOU
M-MAN AND
W-WIFE.





BATMAN LIVES
TONIGHT...

--GONNA
BEAT YOU TO A
BLOODY SMEAR,
BATMAN

AND THEN I'M
GONNA TEAR DOWN
THIS ENTIRE
TOWN!

UNLESS YOU
TELL ME WHERE
IVY IS

UNLESS YOU
TELL ME WHAT
YOU'VE DONE WITH
MY WIFE!

SPLOOSH

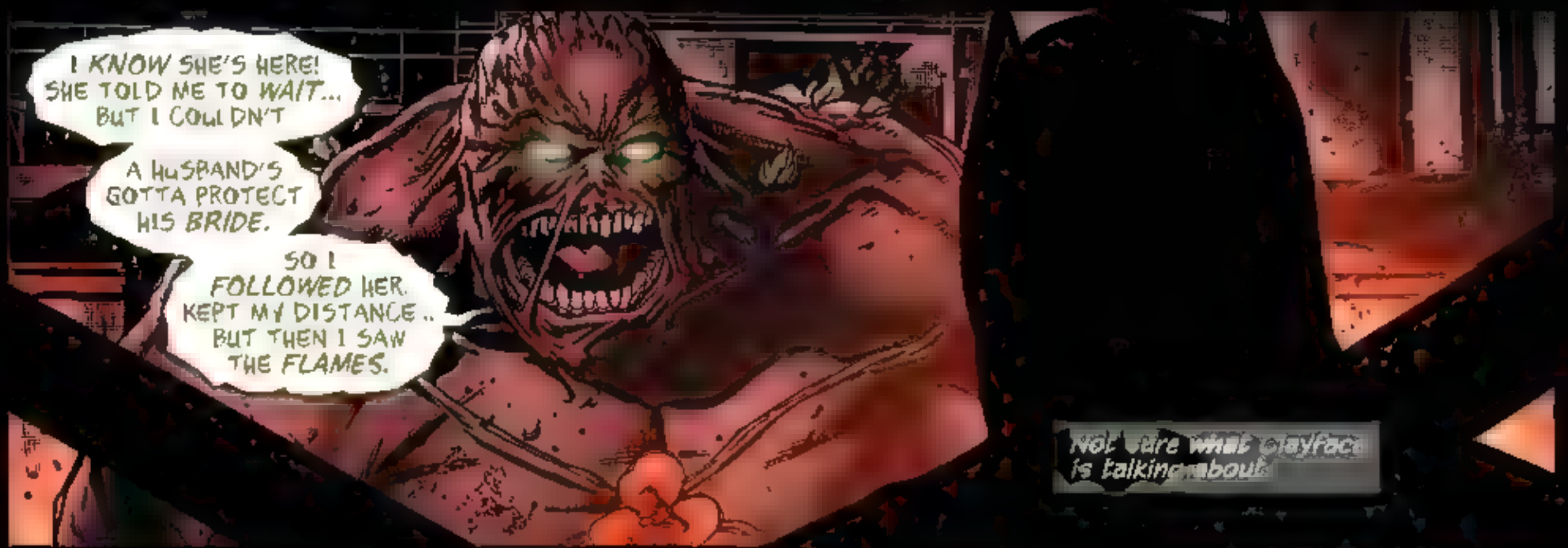
Slavice Island
of Arkham

Intact

and what's already come
into a bad night just got
exponentially worse

Batman in
**DETECTIVE
COMICS**
THE DIRT NAP

written by JOHN LAYMAN
art by JASON FABOK
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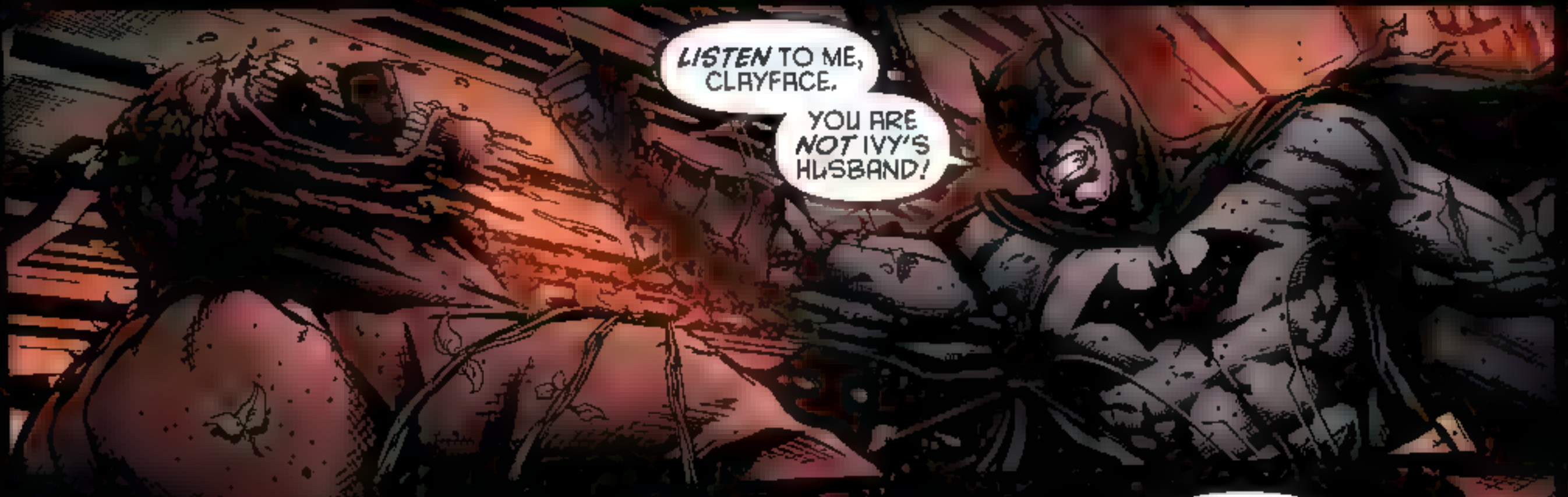


I KNOW SHE'S HERE!
SHE TOLD ME TO WAIT...
BUT I COULDN'T

A HUSBAND'S
GOTTA PROTECT
HIS BRIDE.

SO I
FOLLOWED HER.
KEPT MY DISTANCE..
BUT THEN I SAW
THE FLAMES.

Not sure what Clayface
is talking about.



LISTEN TO ME,
CLAYFACE.

YOU ARE
NOT IVY'S
HUSBAND!



But I have a pretty
good reason why
he thinks he's

YOU'RE HER
PUPPET.

SHE'S
CONTROLLING
YOU.

THAT'S
WHAT SHE
DOES.



NO WAY.
NOT AFTER WHAT
WE'VE BEEN THROUGH.
NOT AFTER HOUSTON.
NOT AFTER MAMI.

ME AND
IVY WE'RE
PARTNERS.
WE'RE A
TEAM.

It doesn't make
sense, though.

Ivy's able to control men by passing
along a particular toxin during
skin-to-skin contact. Specifically
from her lips, which exude the poison.



Clayface has been chemically altered
so his entire body is a sort of dirt now.
He technically doesn't even have skin.

WE'RE IN
LOVE.

This simply
shouldn't be



I need to knock some sense into Clayface

Snap him out of whatever hold she has over the beast

WHUMP



THAT SUPPOSED TO HURT, BATMAN?

'CAUSE IT JUST TICKLES

Unfortunately, after dealing with Ivy, getting gassed, knocked out and ambushed,

I'm not exactly in top form



NOW, I'M GONNA ASK YOU ONE MORE TIME.

TELL ME WHERE MY WIFE IS.

Clayface Focused

Angry



And

thornyr



GET UP,
BATMAN.
I AIN'T MADE
YOU THAT BLOODY
SMEAR YET.

I can't do this.

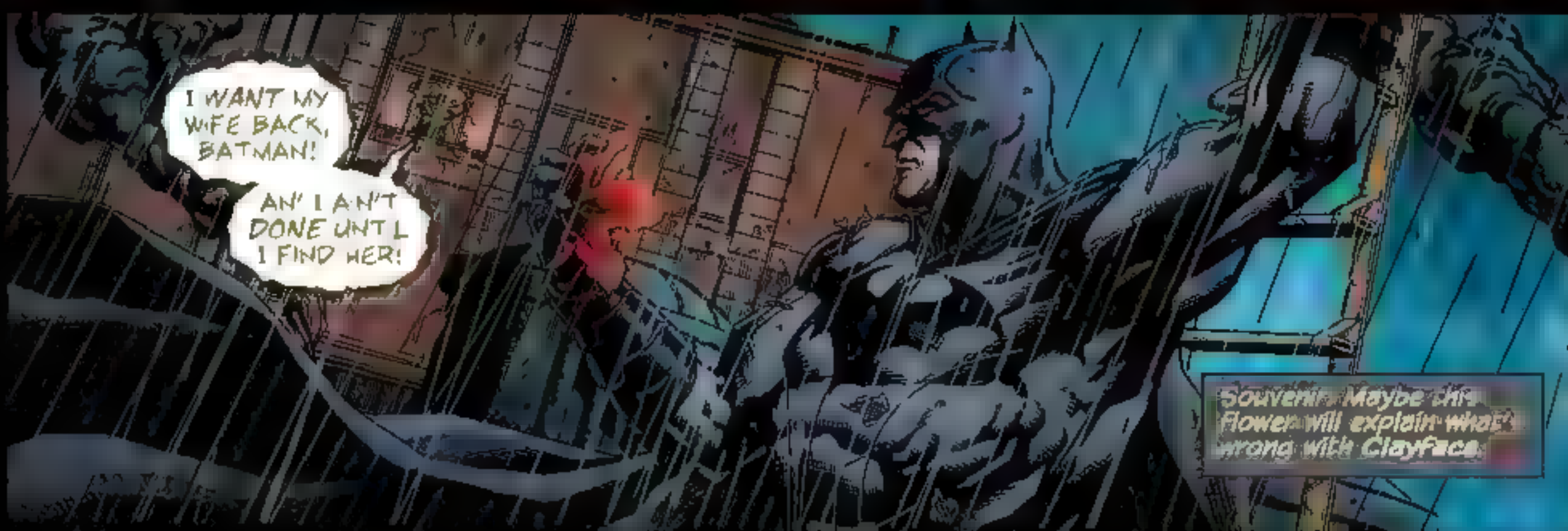
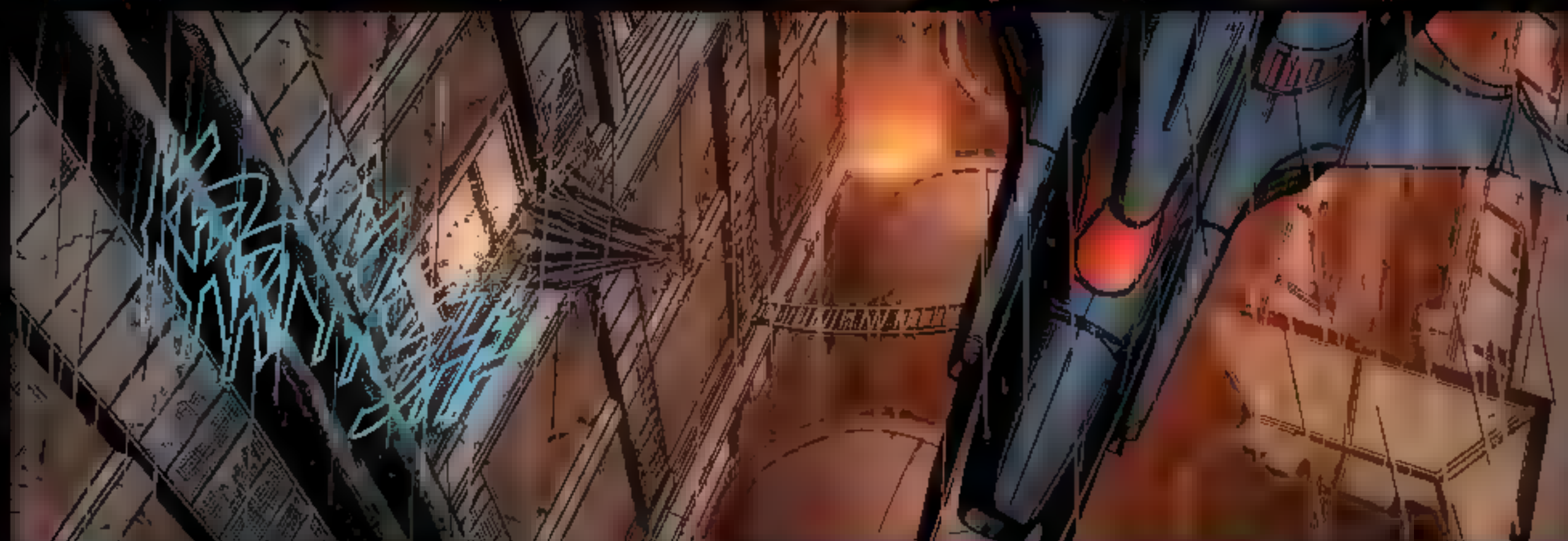


I'm not equipped.



BATPLANE--
LADDER DROP TO MY
COORDINATES.

IN THREE...
TWO...



I WANT MY
WIFE BACK,
BATMAN!
AN' I AIN'T
DONE UNTL
I FIND HER!

Souvenir. Maybe this
flower will explain what's
wrong with Clayface.



ACROSS TOWN.
THE ICEBERG CASINO...

"IT'S DONE, BOSS."



I JUST GOT THE CALL.

THE ECOTERRORIST WHO'S BEEN SABOTAGING YOUR OPERATIONS--**POISON IVY**--SHE'S SIX FEET UNDER. JUST AS YOU ORDERED, MR. COBBLEPOT.

BURIED. CRATE OF REINFORCED STEEL.

AIRTIGHT, OGILVY?



ENOUGH AIR TO LAST A HALF HOUR, IF SHE'S LUCKY.

AND THEY LOCKED HER IN NEARLY AN HOUR AND A HALF AGO.



GOOD, GOOD. NO LOOSE ENDS.

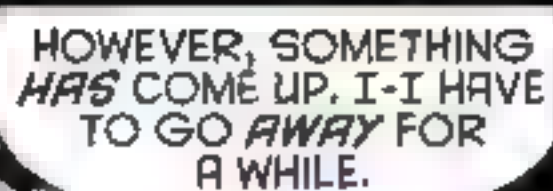
I-I DON'T LIKE LOOSE ENDS.

BOSS, YOU OKAY? YOU LOOK--



EVERYTHING IS PERFECTLY FINE...

...WHY WOULDN'T IT BE?



HOWEVER, SOMETHING *HAS* COME UP. I-I HAVE TO GO *AWAY* FOR A WHILE.

AWAY?

ARKHAM. I...I HAVE TO HELP A... FRIEND.*

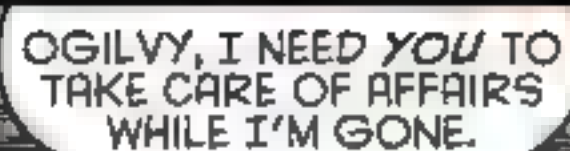
*SEE BATMAN #14 FOR DETAILS ON PENGUIN'S INVOLVEMENT IN DEATH OF THE FAMILY! --MIKE



I CAME BACK HERE TO TAKE CARE OF A COUPLE OF THINGS.

SOME... LOOSE ENDS.

BUT NOW I...MUST BE GOING.



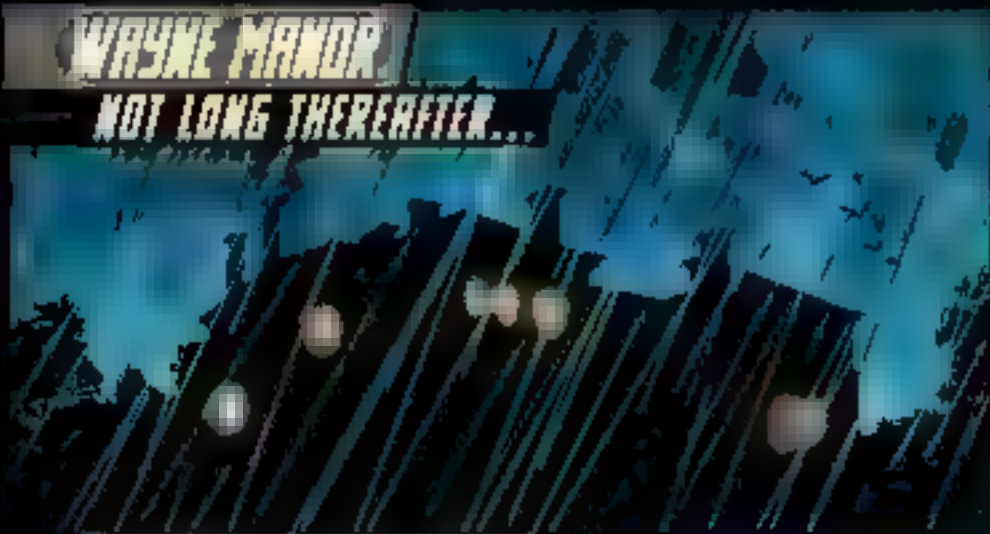
OGILVY, I NEED *YOU* TO TAKE CARE OF AFFAIRS WHILE I'M GONE.

YOU'RE PROVEN YOURSELF A CAPABLE UNDERLING, AND YOU'VE MORE THAN EARNED MY TRUST.

I'M LEAVING *YOU* IN CHARGE. KEEP MY OPERATION RUNNING SMOOTHLY, AND YOUR REWARD WILL BE GREAT.



YOUR OPERATION?



WAYNE MANOR
NOT LONG THEREAFTER...

Just as I thought

There was no Houston
No Miami

I've been looking for Clayface for
the past week, just after somebody
broke him out of Arkham

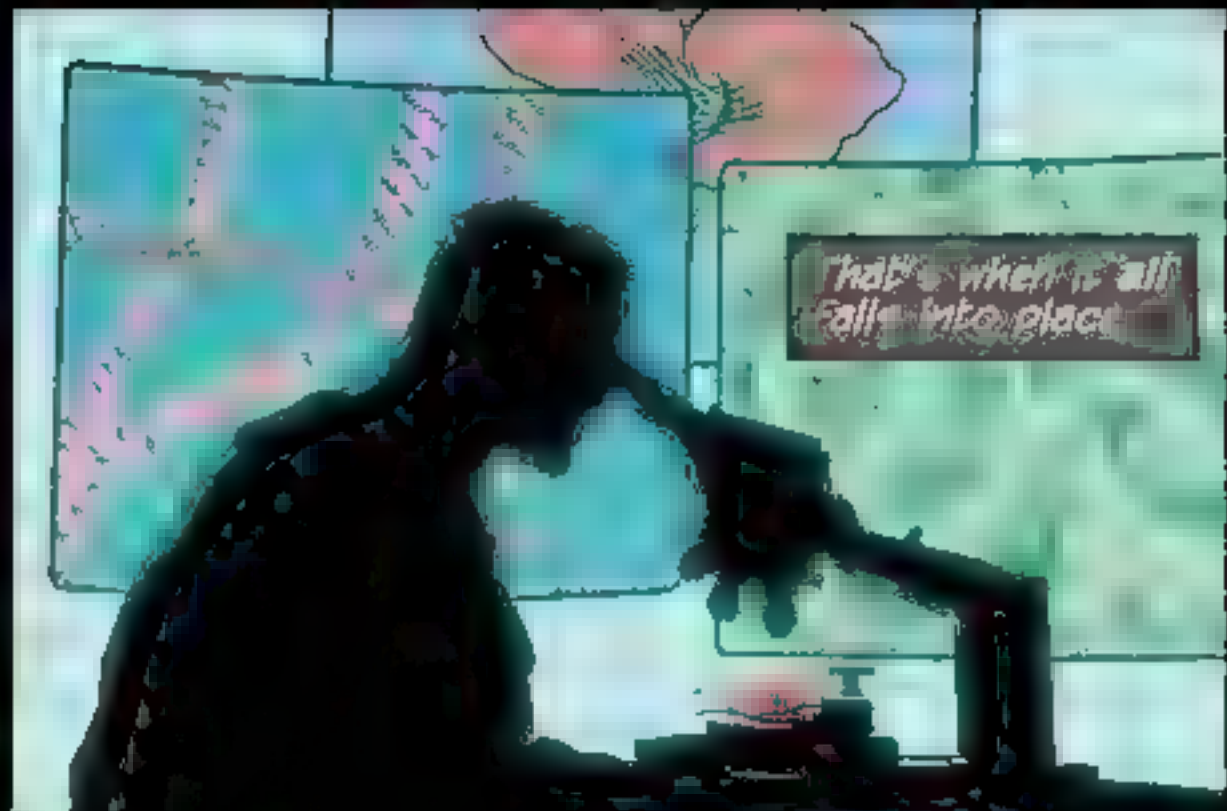


And if I've been keeping a low profile
ever since her unfortunate incident
with the Birds of Prey



on the Amazon!

*SEE BIRDS OF PREY
#10-12. --MIKE



that's when it all
falls into place



And I know exactly
what I need to do

The Shandy Pharmaceutical Processing Plant is in rubble and cinders.

And police scanners put Clayface moving from one building to the next, tearing apart Ellsworth Industrial Park.

ON THE STREETS BELOW

WE CAN'T STOP HIM, COMMISSIONER.

WE DON'T HAVE THE MANPOWER AND WE DON'T HAVE THE WEAPONRY!

WHERE IS SHE?

COMMISSIONER GORDON. I'VE GOT A CALL YOU NEED TO TAKE.


DAMMIT, JOHNSON, I'M KIND OF IN THE MIDDLE OF SOM--

IT'S BATMAN.

PULL YOUR MEN BACK AND DO IT NOW, JIM.

I'VE GOT THIS

CLAYFACE!

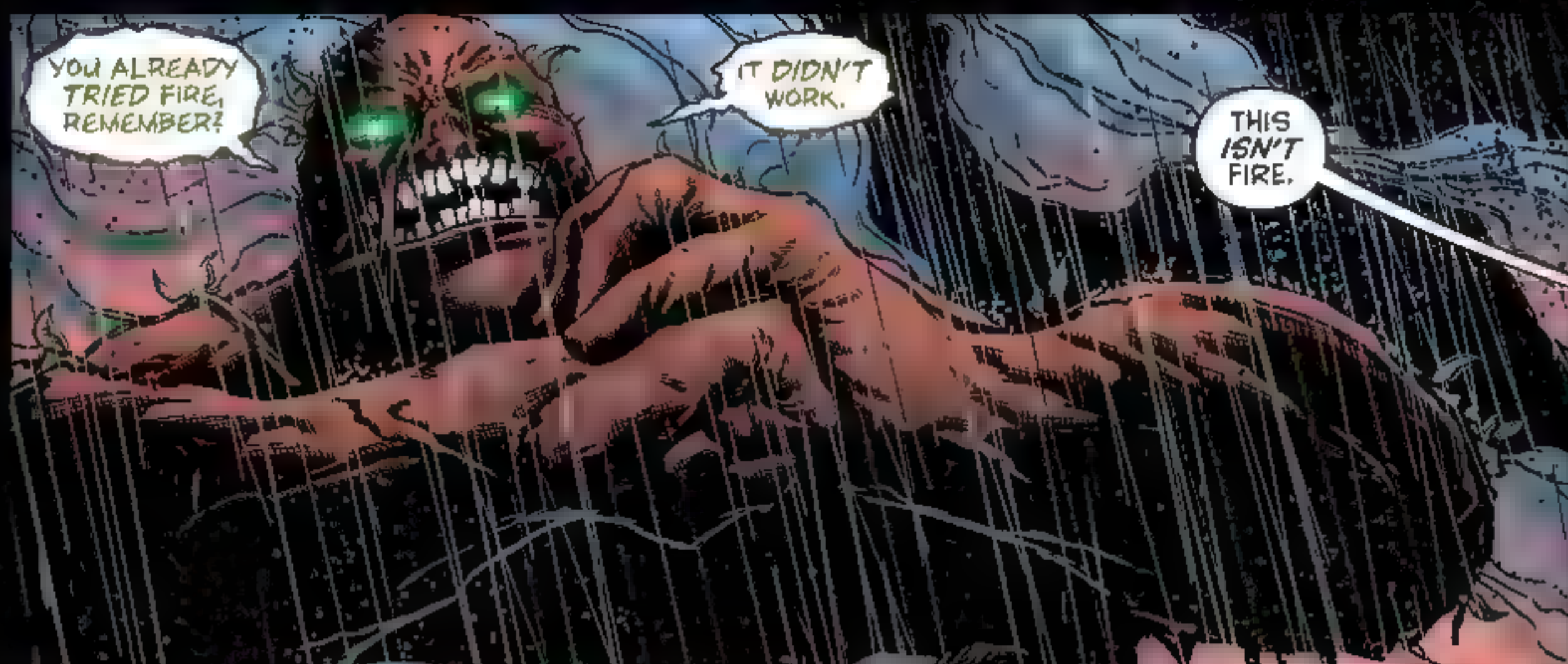
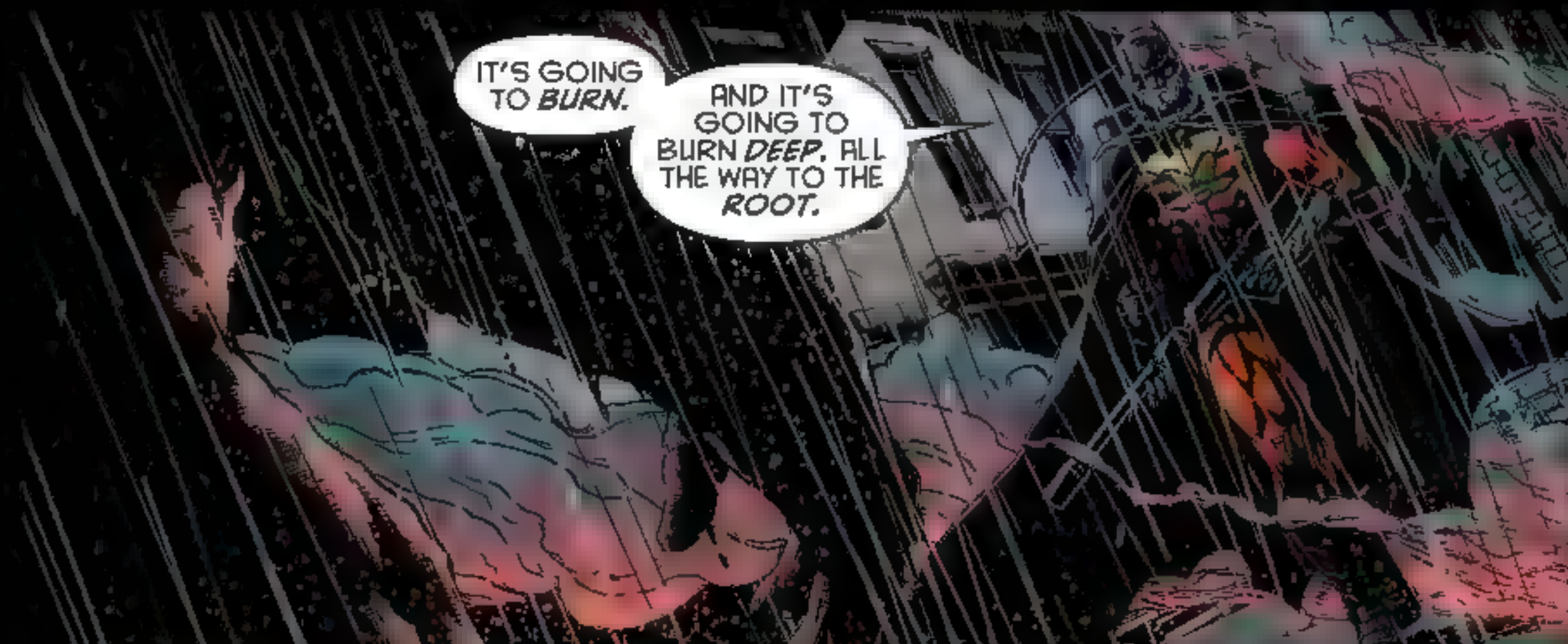


WHAT
THE--?

YOU WANT TO
KNOW WHERE
YOUR *WIFE* IS,
CLAYFACE?

I'M HERE
TO *SHOW*
YOU.

BUT THE
TRUTH IS
GOING TO
HURT.

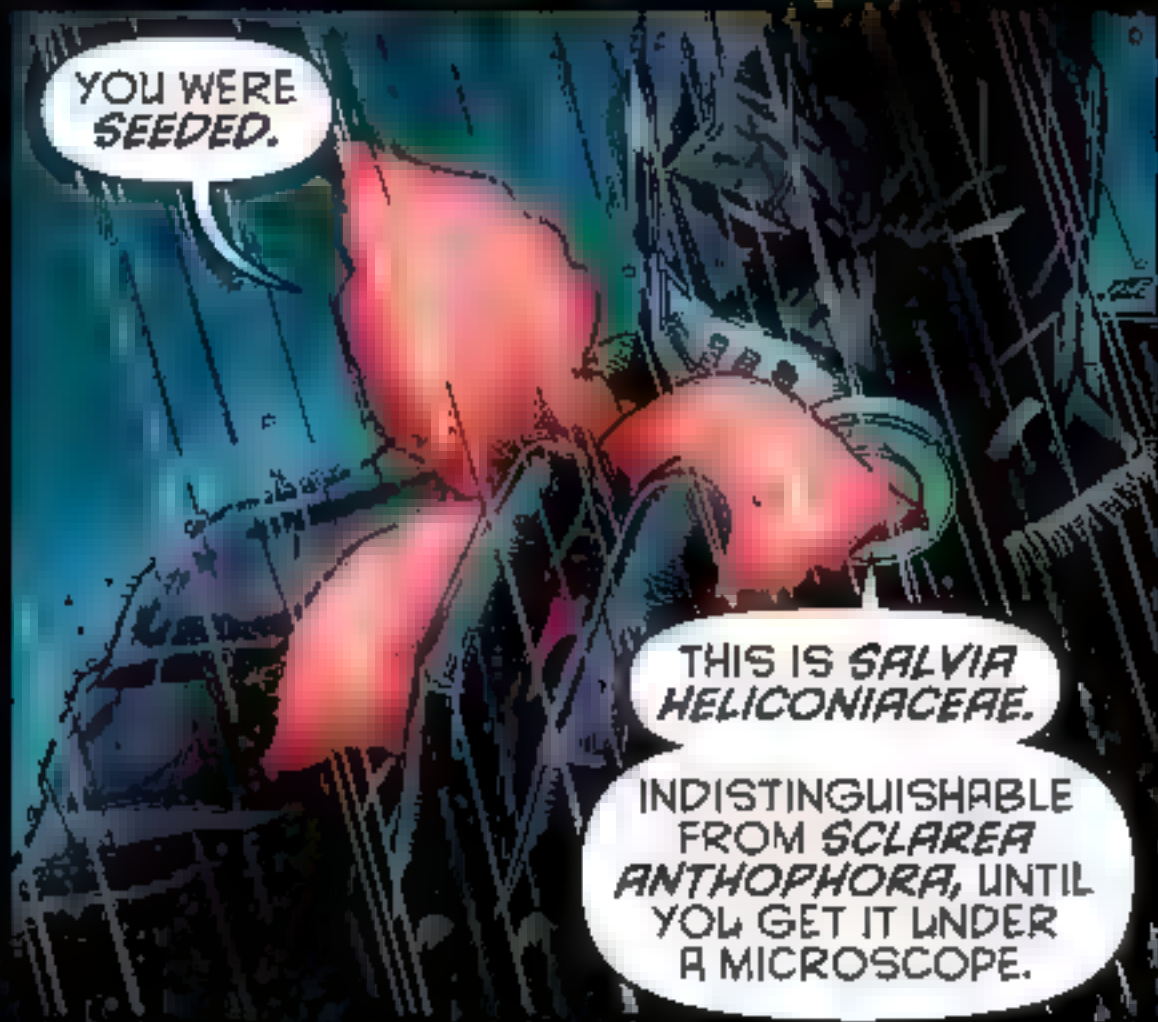




My own concoction

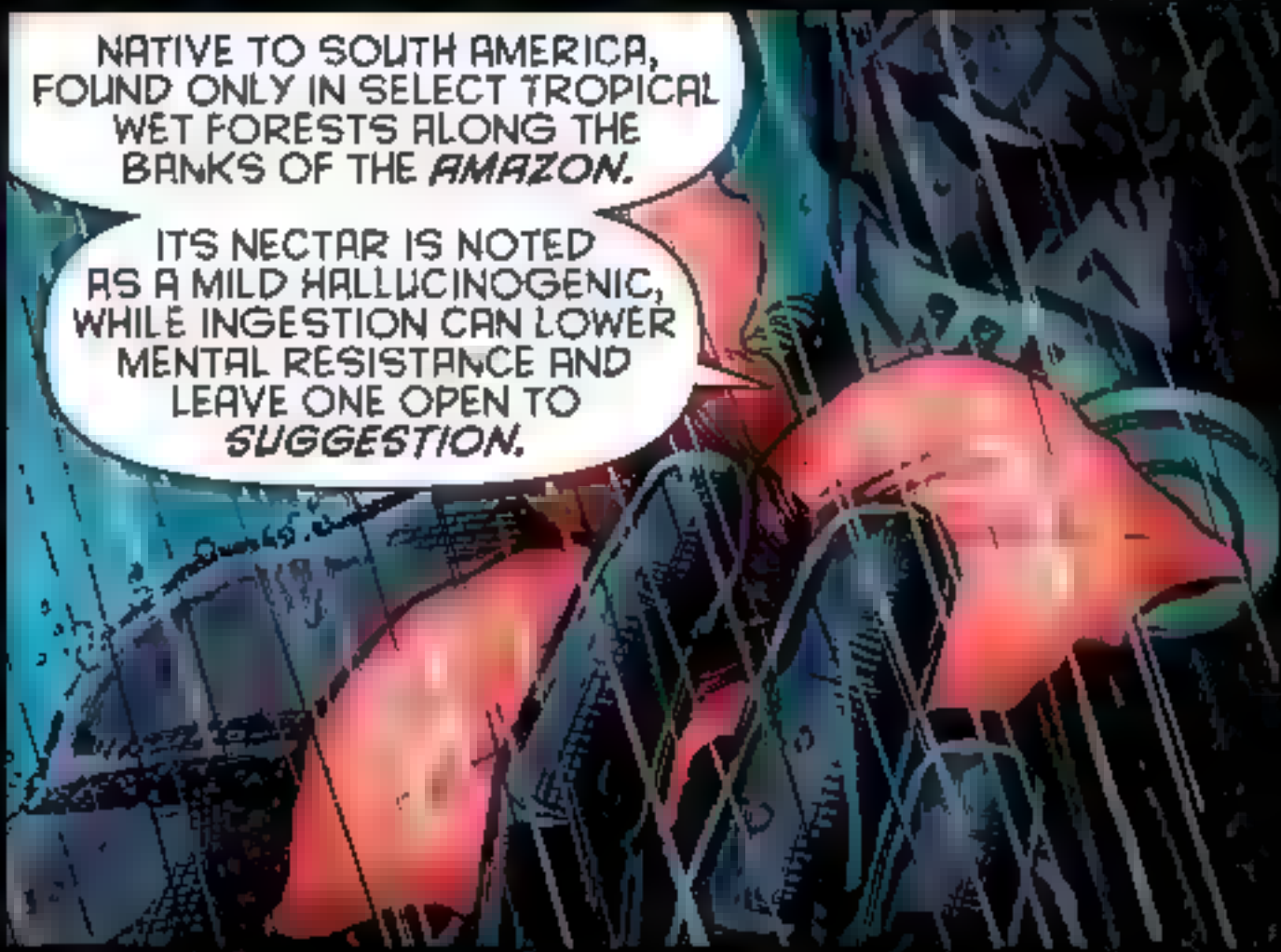
With some defoliant and napalm mixed in to achieve the strongest, fastest effect

YOU WERE NEVER MARRIED, CLAYFACE.



YOU WERE SEEDED.

THIS IS *SALVIA HELICONIACEAE*.
INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM *SCLAREA ANTHOPHORA*, UNTIL YOU GET IT UNDER A MICROSCOPE.



NATIVE TO SOUTH AMERICA, FOUND ONLY IN SELECT TROPICAL WET FORESTS ALONG THE BANKS OF THE *AMAZON*.

ITS NECTAR IS NOTED AS A MILD HALLUCINOGENIC, WHILE INGESTION CAN LOWER MENTAL RESISTANCE AND LEAVE ONE OPEN TO SUGGESTION.

IVY'S MADE A LOT OF ENEMIES LATELY. TRYING TO THREATEN THE BIRDS OF PREY INTO SUBMISSION DIDN'T EXACTLY WORK OUT



SHE NEEDED BACK-UP

SHE NEEDED A *BODYGUARD* TOUGH AND OBEIENT



SO SHE BROKE YOU OUT OF ARKHAM



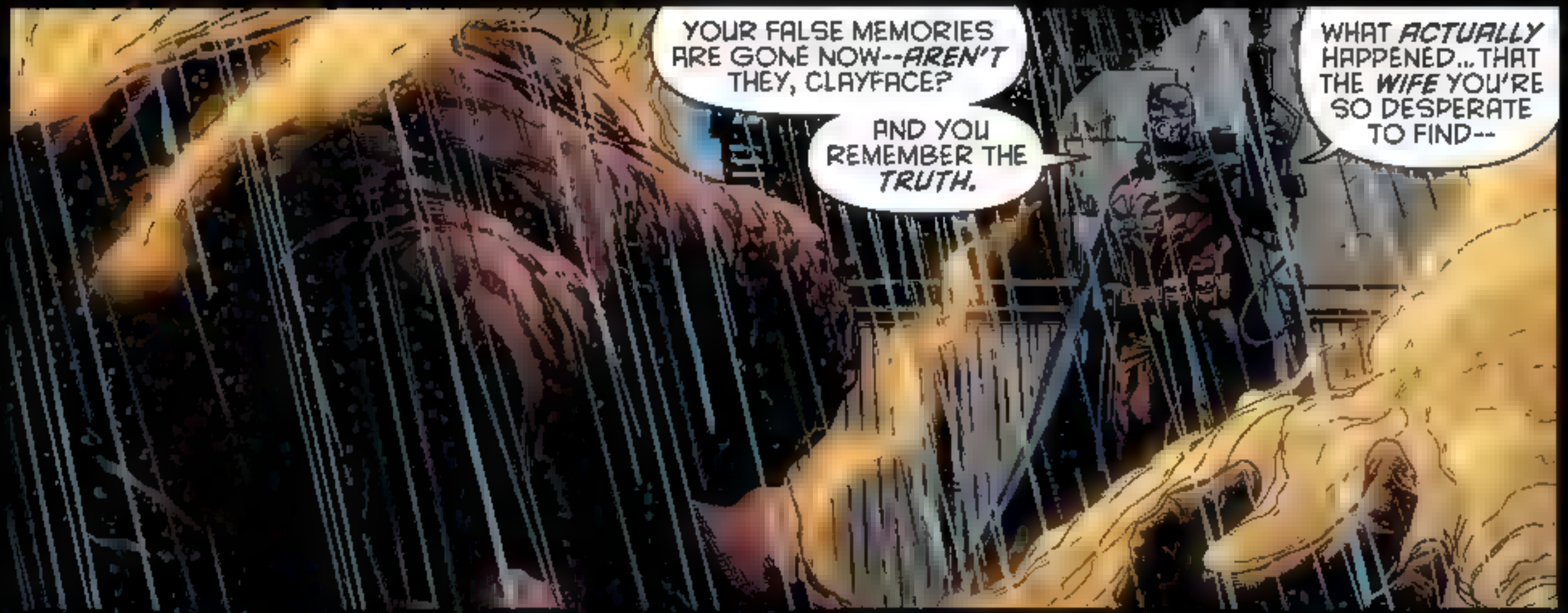
AND DID WHAT SHE ALWAYS DOES



IVY CONTROLS MEN. IVY CONTROLS PLANTS

IMAGINE WHAT SHE COULD DO WITH *BOTH*



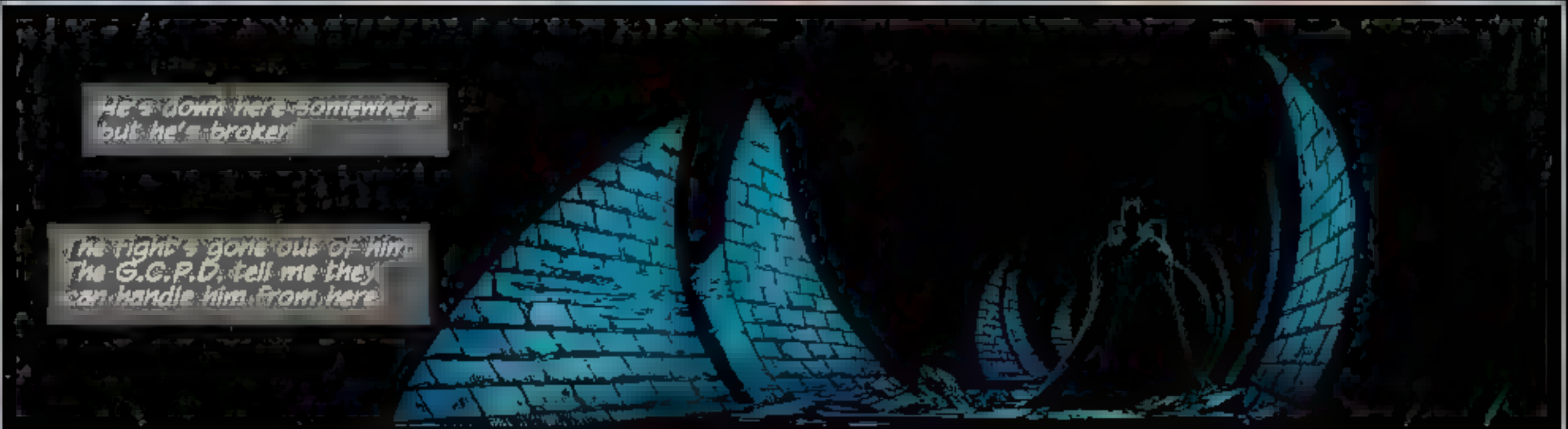




He smashes his way
through the street

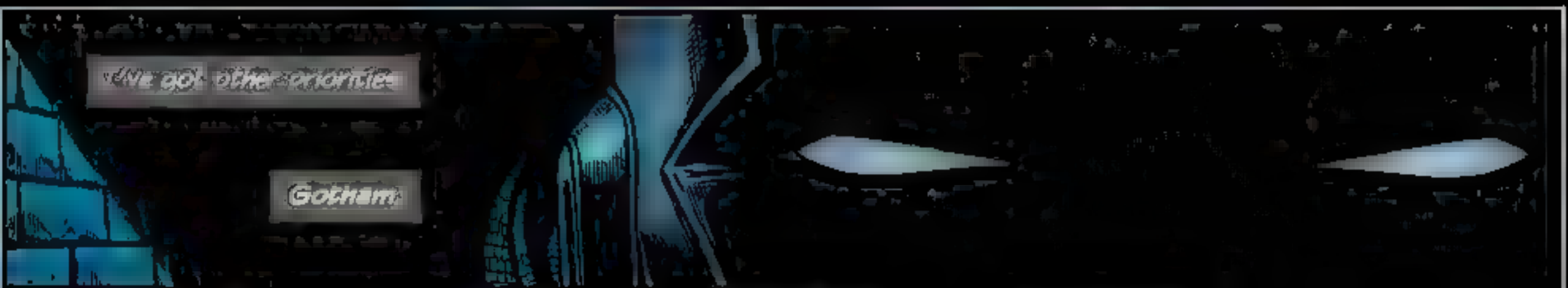


and into the sewer



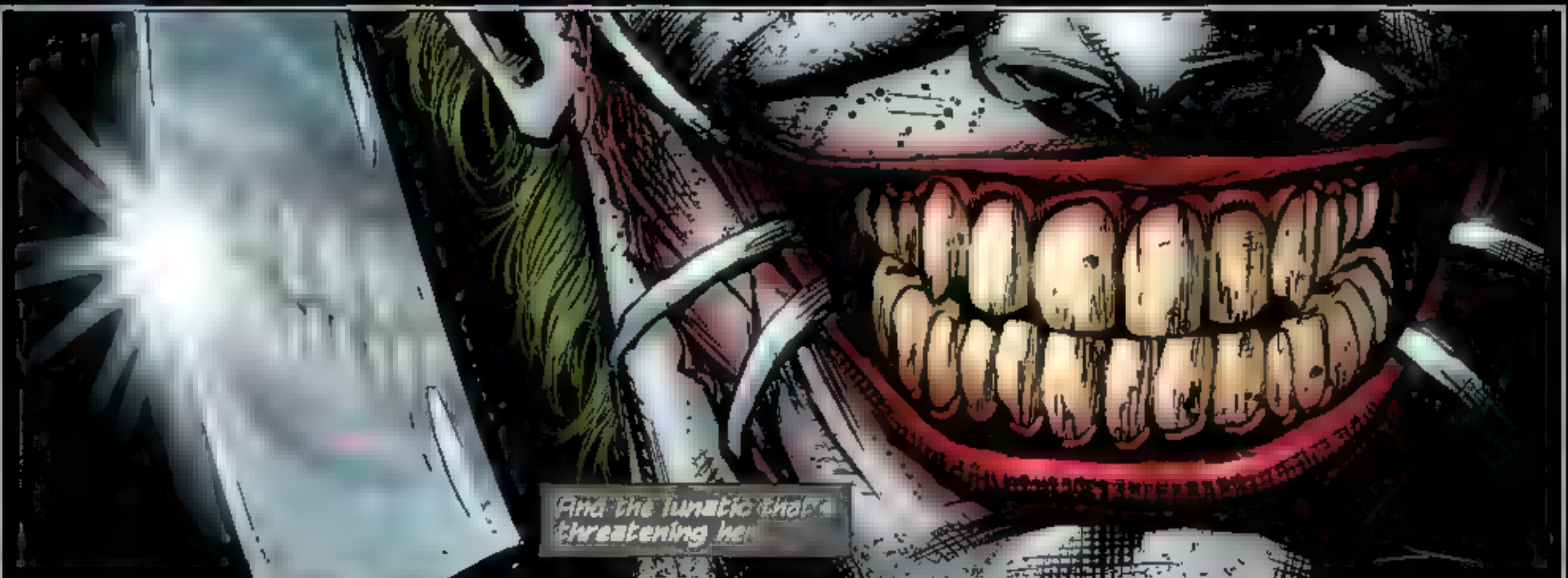
He's down here somewhere
but he's broken

His fight's gone out of him.
The G.C.P.D. tell me they
can handle him from here



We've got other priorities

Gotham



And the lunatic who's
threatening her

NOT LONG THEREAFTER

⇒GASP⇒

⇒PANT⇒
⇒PANT⇒

WELCOME
BACK,
MS. ISLEY.

NO DOUBT
YOUR STAY WAS
UNPLEASANT, BUT
AT LEAST IT'S AT
AN *END*.

YOU HAVE MY
APOLOGIES.

YOU!

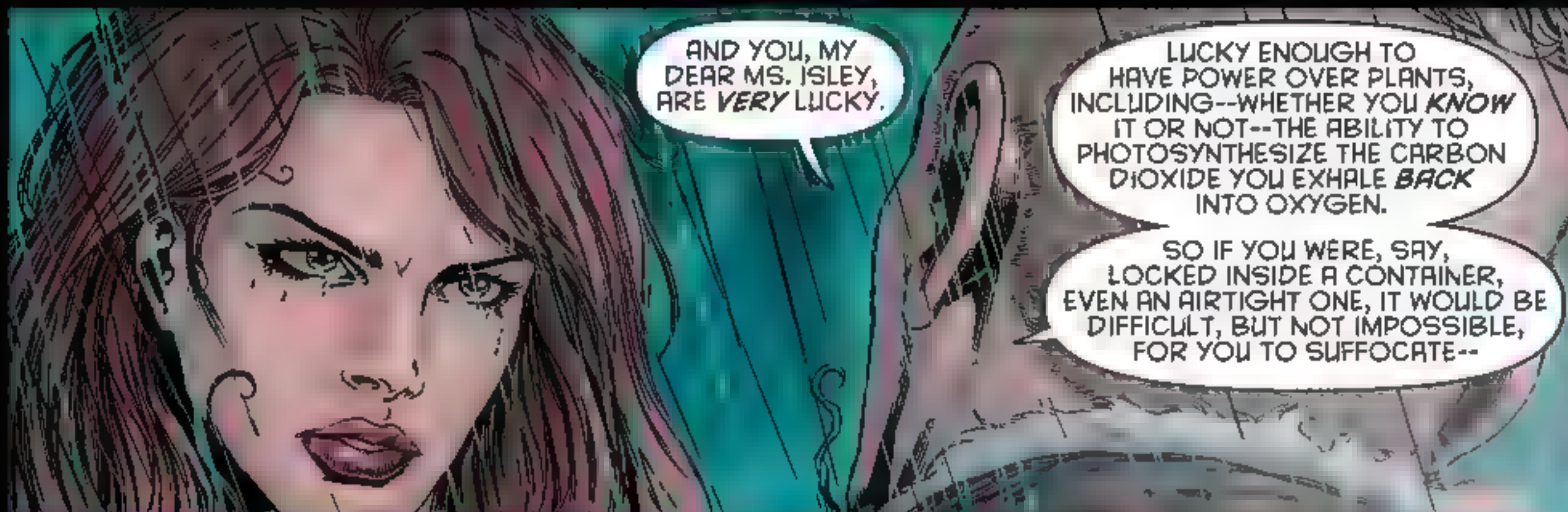
YOU COULD
HAVE *KILLED*
ME!

NOT A
CHANCE.

I WAS *BURIED*.
LOCKED AWAY.
THERE WASN'T
ENOUGH *AIR* IN
THERE TO--

TO LAST
YOU A HALF
HOUR.

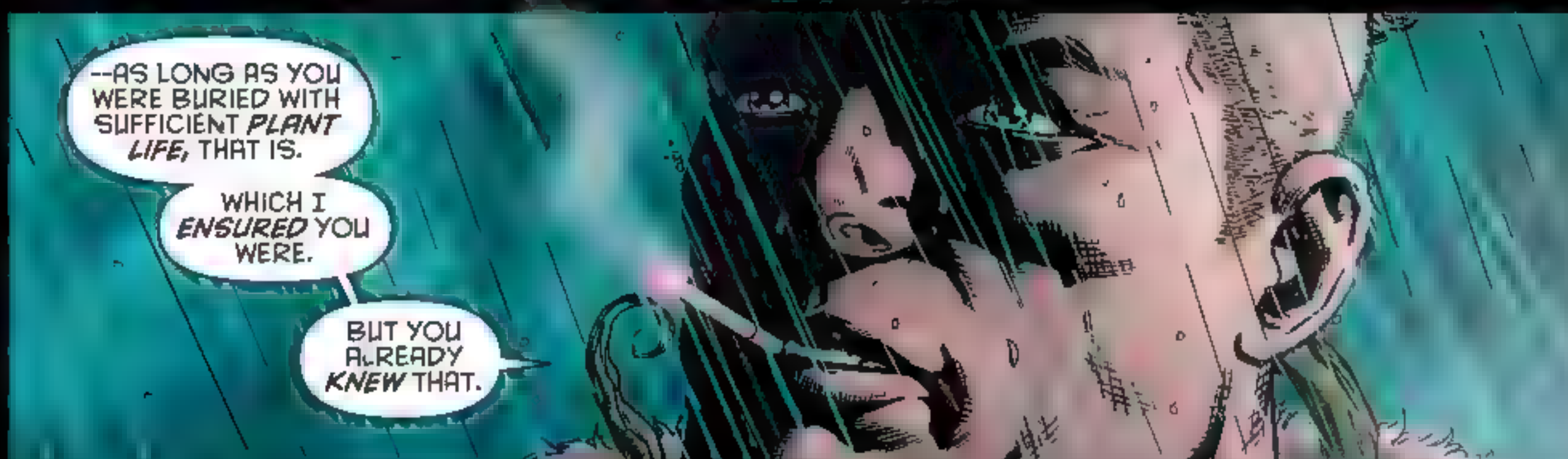
IF YOU
WERE
LUCKY.



AND YOU, MY DEAR MS. ISLEY, ARE *VERY* LUCKY.

LUCKY ENOUGH TO HAVE POWER OVER PLANTS, INCLUDING--WHETHER YOU *KNOW* IT OR NOT--THE ABILITY TO PHOTOSYNTHESIZE THE CARBON DIOXIDE YOU EXHALE *BACK* INTO OXYGEN.

SO IF YOU WERE, SAY, LOCKED INSIDE A CONTAINER, EVEN AN AIRTIGHT ONE, IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT, BUT NOT IMPOSSIBLE, FOR YOU TO SUFFOCATE--



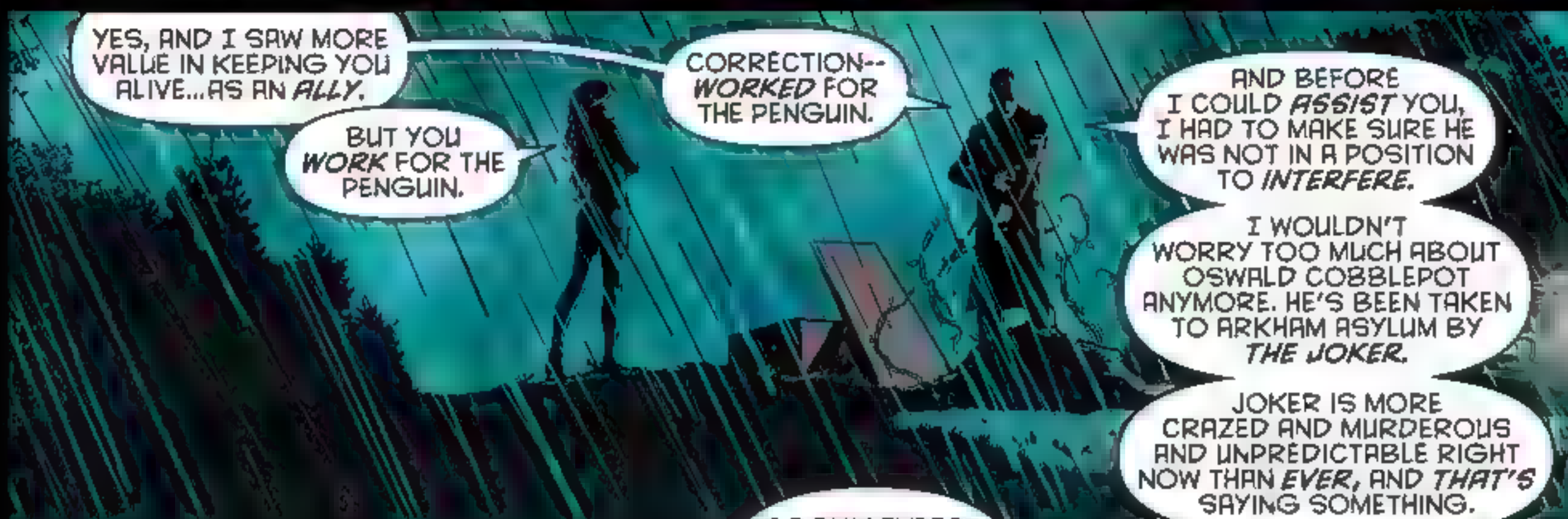
--AS LONG AS YOU WERE BURIED WITH SUFFICIENT *PLANT* LIFE, THAT IS.

WHICH I *ENSURED* YOU WERE.

BUT YOU ALREADY *KNEW* THAT.



PENGUIN WANTED ME DEAD.



YES, AND I SAW MORE VALUE IN KEEPING YOU ALIVE...AS AN *ALLY*.

BUT YOU *WORK* FOR THE PENGUIN.

CORRECTION--*WORKED* FOR THE PENGUIN.

AND BEFORE I COULD *ASSIST* YOU, I HAD TO MAKE SURE HE WAS NOT IN A POSITION TO *INTERFERE*.

I WOULDN'T WORRY TOO MUCH ABOUT OSWALD COBBLEPOT ANYMORE. HE'S BEEN TAKEN TO ARKHAM ASYLUM BY *THE JOKER*.

JOKER IS MORE CRAZED AND MURDEROUS AND UNPREDICTABLE RIGHT NOW THAN *EVER*, AND *THAT'S* SAYING SOMETHING.



I DON'T EXPECT COBBLEPOT TO RETURN, AND EVEN IF HE DOES, HE WON'T FIND MUCH OF HIS EMPIRE LEFT TO RETURN TO.

WHO *ARE* YOU?

MY NAME IS *IGNATIUS OGILVY*--



--BUT YOU
CAN CALL ME
**EMPEROR
PENGUIN.**



next: **THE EMPEROR STRIKES!**

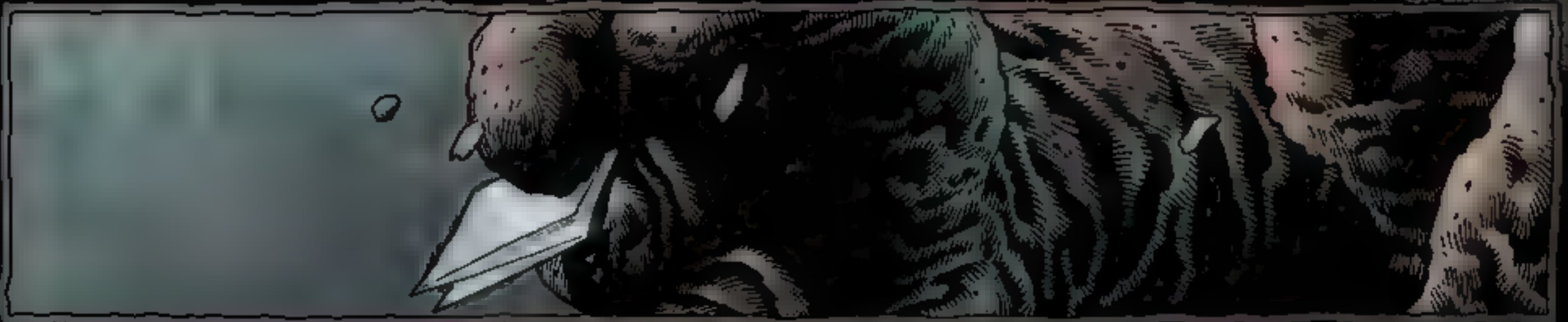
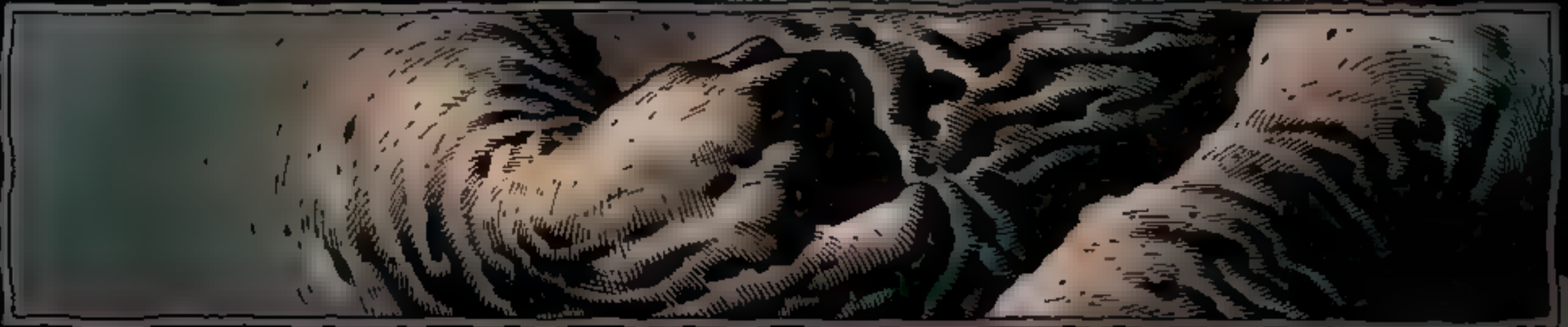
THE GOTHAM SEWERS

NOW...

LOVE IN BLOOM

STARRING CLAYFACE

WRITTEN BY JOHN LAYMAN
ART BY ANDY CLARKE
COLORS BY BLOND
LETTERS BY TAYLOR ESPOSITO
ASSISTANT EDITOR KATIE KUBERT
ASSOCIATE EDITOR HARVEY RICHARDS
EDITOR MIKE MARTS



HEY,
KARLO.

YO!

TALKING
TO YOU,
CLAYFACE!

LETTER
FOR BASIL
KARLO.

HUH?

HEH.

GO FIGURE.
LOOKS LIKE
YOU GOT AN
ADMIRER.



ARE YOU
SERIOUS?

WHAT KIND
OF PERSON
WRITES FAN MAIL
TO MUD?

IT'S *NOT* FAN MAIL. YOU'VE
READ 'EM, RIGHT? THESE
ARE STRAIGHT-OUT
LOVE LETTERS.

COULD BE WORSE, I
SUPPOSE. THINK ABOUT
ALL THE MAIL FOR
THE JOKER.

ALL THE TWISTED
OBSESSIVES, TRUE-
CRIME BUFFS AND
MURDER JUNKIES.

GOTTA
FIGURE *SOME-*
BODY OUT THERE HAS
A THING FOR CLAY.

YEAH, BUT A *HOT*
REDHEAD MYSTERY
ADMIRER?

A LETTER
EVERY OTHER
DAY LIKE CLOCK-
WORK, WITH AN
ENCLOSED PHOTO
AND A DRIED-UP
FLOWER?

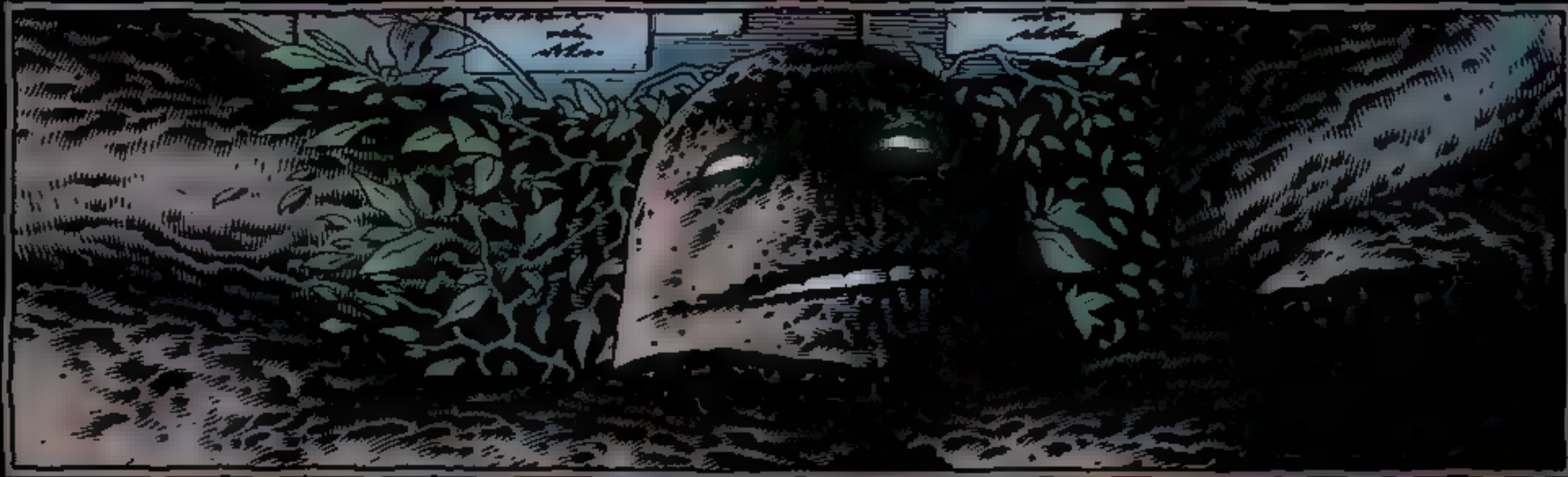
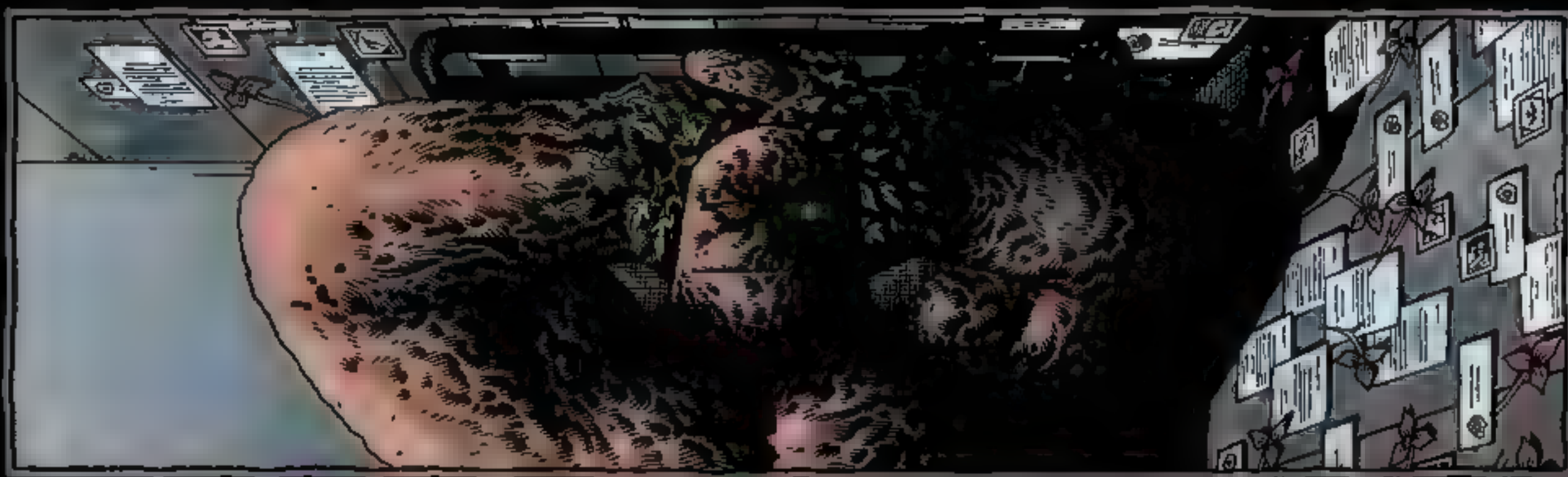
WE DON'T *KNOW* THAT
SHE'S HOT. ALL HER PHOTOS
ARE FUZZY, IN SHADOW,
OR SHOT AT WEIRD
ANGLES.

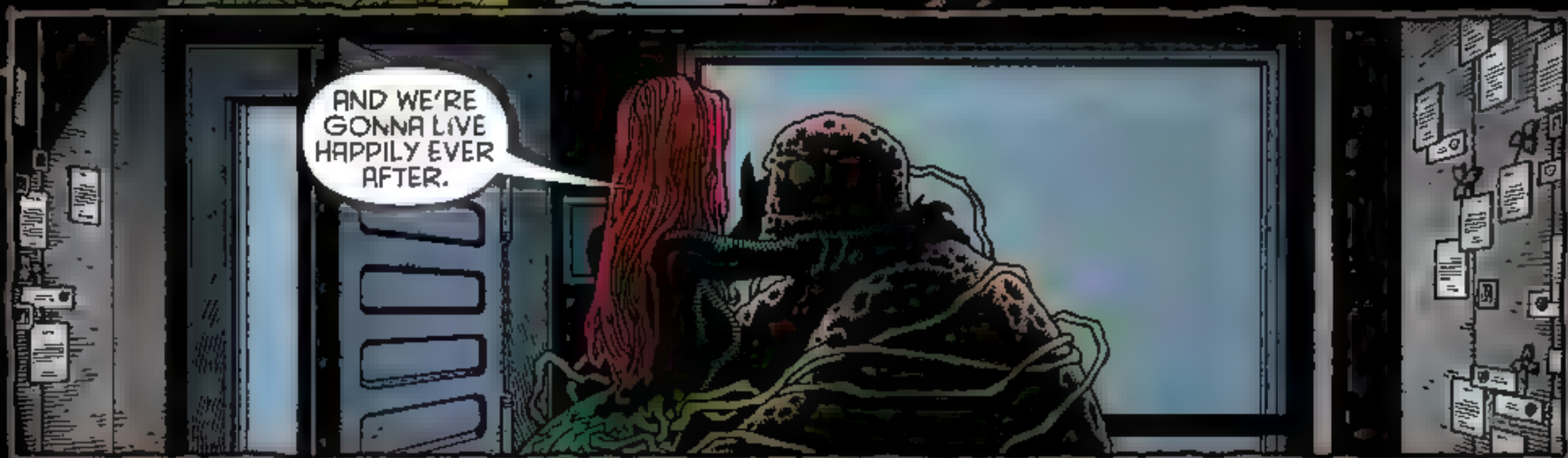
FOR ALL WE
KNOW, SHE COULD
HAVE A FACE LIKE
MY MOTHER-IN-
LAW'S PLG.

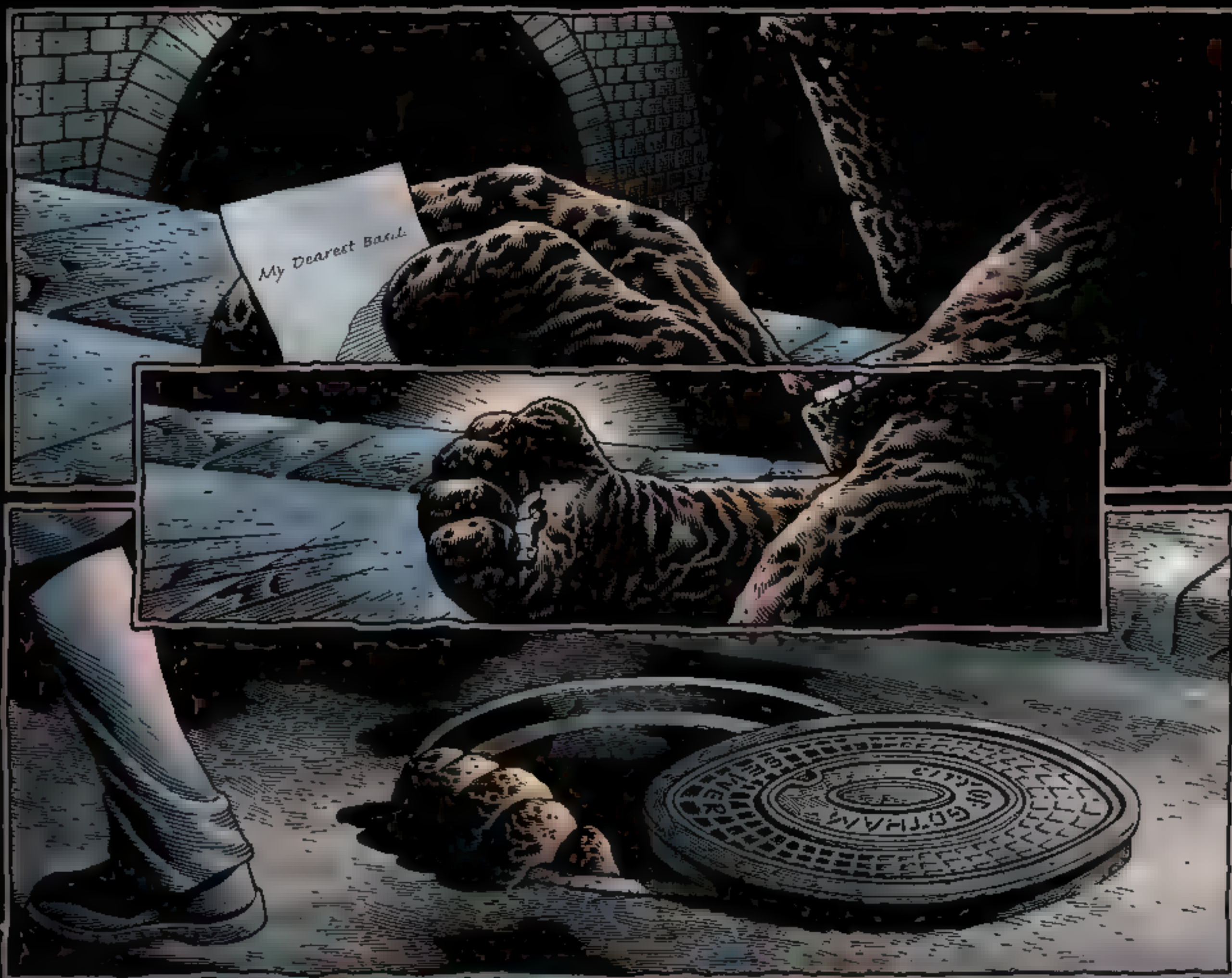
MAIL
CALL.

"MY
DEAREST
BASIL"

My Dearest Basil







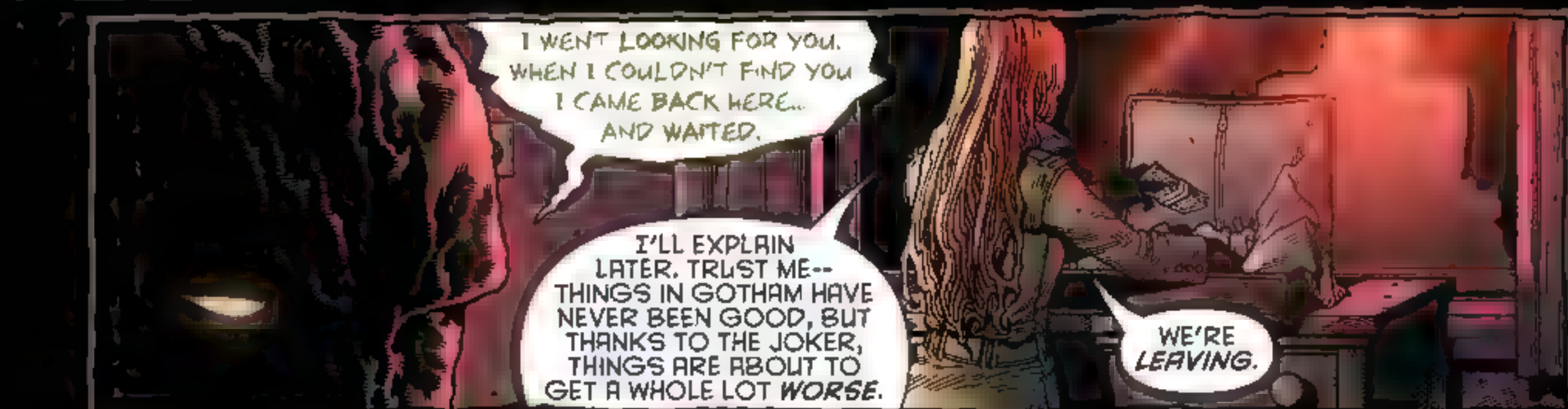
EPILOGUE

JUST OUTSIDE GOTHAM. SOME HOURS LATER
THE RENDEZVOUS POINT...



SORRY
I'M LATE, KARLO.
THINGS DIDN'T
WORK OUT AS
PLANNED.

GET
YOUR STUFF
TOGETHER.



I WENT LOOKING FOR YOU.
WHEN I COULDN'T FIND YOU
I CAME BACK HERE...
AND WAITED.

I'LL EXPLAIN
LATER. TRUST ME--
THINGS IN GOTHAM HAVE
NEVER BEEN GOOD, BUT
THANKS TO THE JOKER,
THINGS ARE ABOUT TO
GET A WHOLE LOT WORSE.

WE'RE
LEAVING.



NO.

"NO"?



I DON'T
THINK SO.

BASIL,
SWEETIE. LISTEN
TO IVY AND DO
WHAT YOU'RE
TOLD.

WE DON'T
HAVE TIME
FOR THIS.



CLAYFACE!



FIN?

SOME TIME AGO...

"DOCTOR YI.

"LOVELY
TO SEE YOU.

"I SO ENJOY
OUR LITTLE CHATS."



DID YOU BY
CHANCE HAPPEN TO
READ MY JOURNAL,
I WONDER?

I...
...I'M SORRY.
I COULDN'T
ACTUALLY MAKE
IT OUT, MR.
JOKER.

YES.



I'M AFRAID
BETWEEN MY
ENTHUSIASM AND
MY CHOICE OF
INK, WELL--

--I MAY
HAVE SACRIFICED
SOMETHING.

A LOT OF
THINGS, INCLUDING
LEGIBILITY.



BUT THAT BOOK IS FILLED WITH
EVERY OBSERVATION I HAVE MADE IN
MY SPECIAL TIME ON EARTH.

EVERYTHING.
AND I HAVE
OBSERVED
SO MUCH,
DOCTOR.



A PAPER
ABOUT MY BOOK'D
MAKE YOU QUITE A
STAR, DOCTOR,
WOULDN'T IT?



HERE.

LET'S WALK
THROUGH IT
TOGETHER,
SHALL WE?



NOW.

We hurt my mother.

He shot me. I spent three years in a chair because of this walking pile of vomit.

And he.

Hurt.

My MOTHER.

AND IT'S ALL SKATE, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, ALL SKATE.

HOW DO YOU FEEL OUR FIRST DATE IS GOING, BATGIRL?

He's killed more people than I can count.

I HAVE TO SAY, I REALLY FEEL WE MAKE A CUTE COUPLE, DON'T YOU?

I THINK IT'S TIME WE TALKED ABOUT THE DOWRY, MY PET.

DEATH OF THE FAMILY
COLLISION - PART TWO
ENGAGEMENT

GAIL SIMONE WRITER DANIEL SAMPERE PENCILS VICENTE CIFUENTES INKS
ULISES ARREDIA COLORIST DAVE SHARPE LETTERS ED BENES & ULISES ARREDIA COVER
KATIE KUBERT ASSISTANT EDITOR BRIAN CUNNINGHAM EDITOR BATMAN CREATED BY BOB KANE

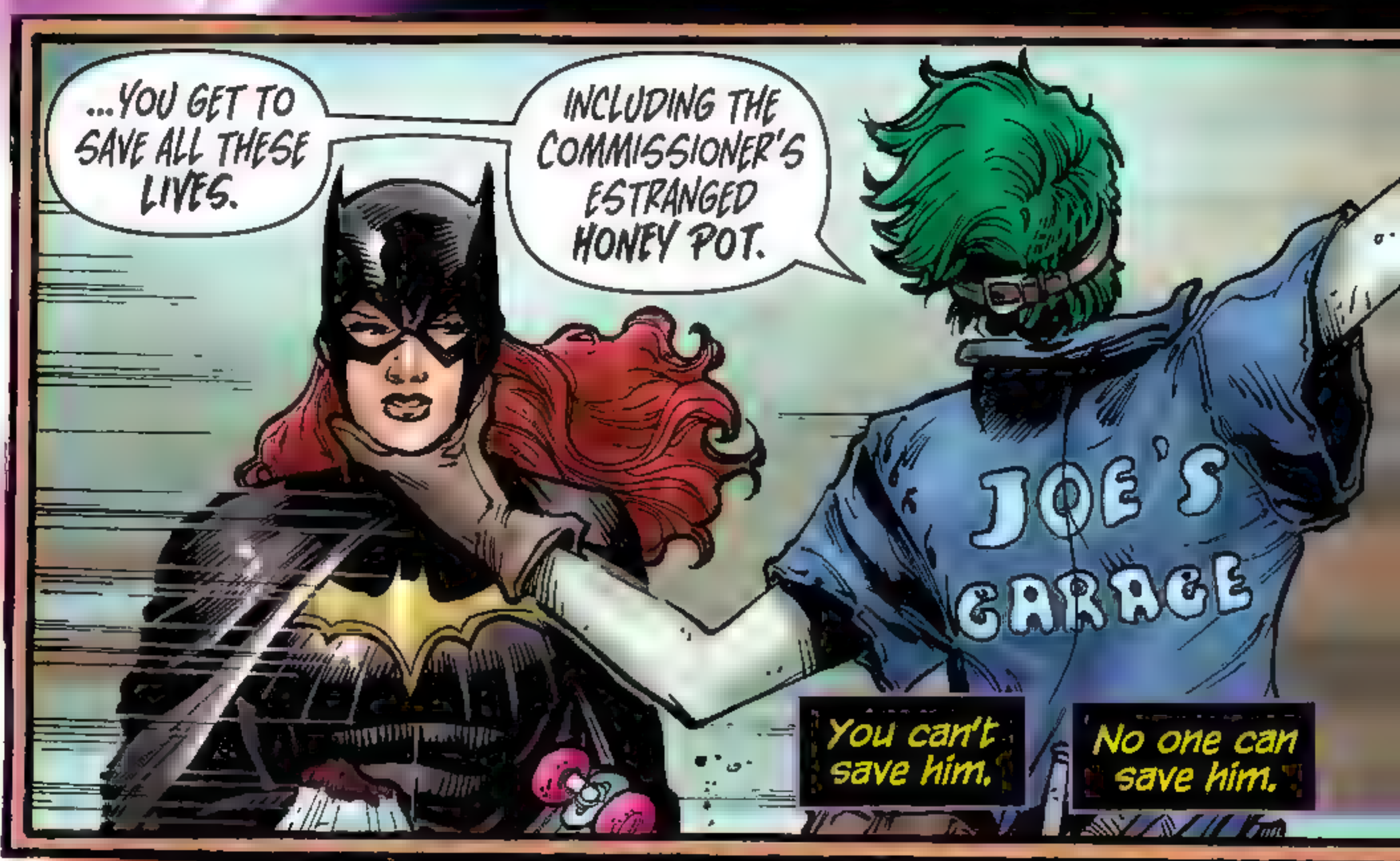


I'm sorry, Batman.

But you're wrong.

I WAS THINKING, IF YOU BECOME MY BLUSHING BRIDE, MY DEAREST HEART OF HEARTS, THE FLOWER IN MY MORNING.

YOU, DEAR BATGIRL...

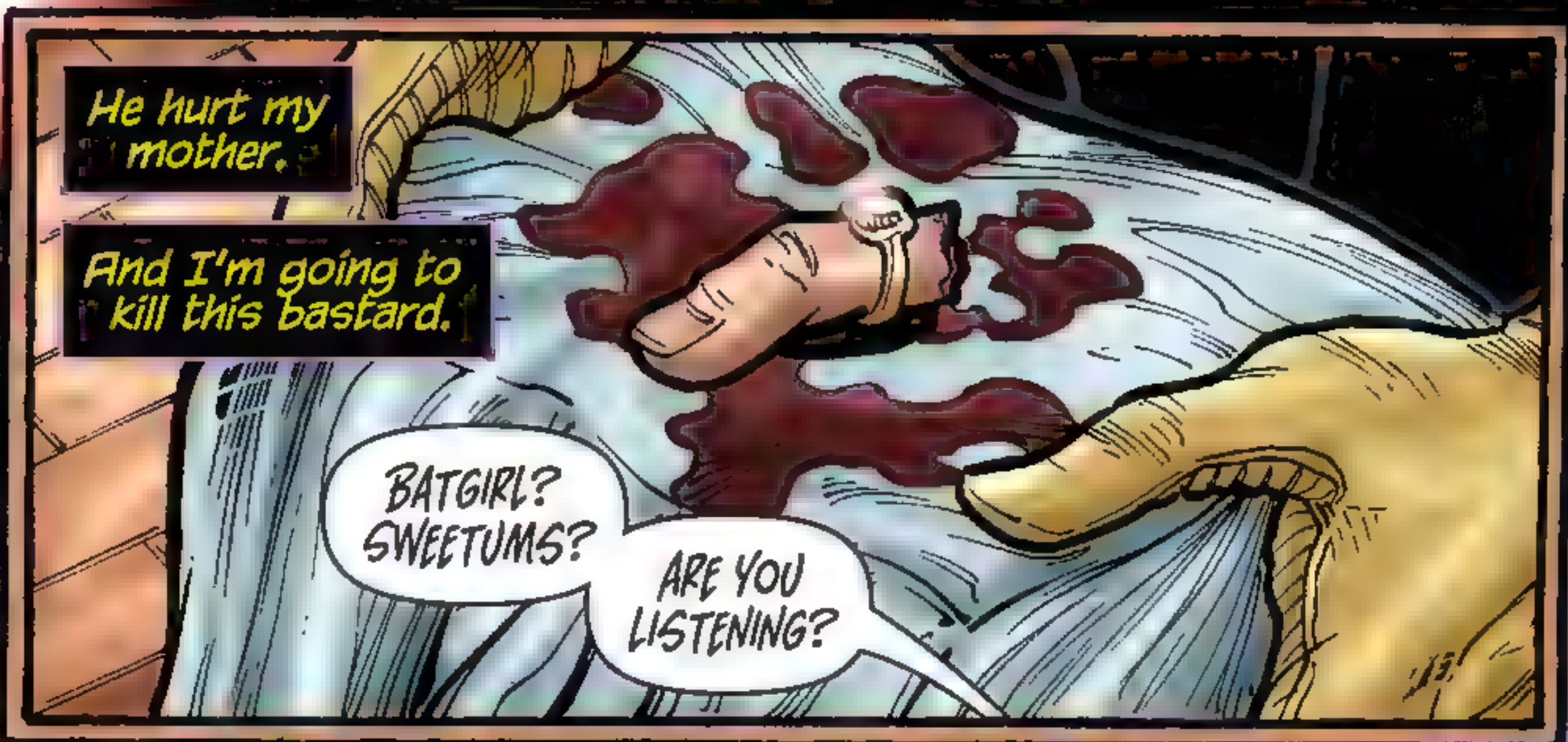


...YOU GET TO SAVE ALL THESE LIVES.

INCLUDING THE COMMISSIONER'S ESTRANGED HONEY POT.

You can't save him.

No one can save him.



He hurt my mother.

And I'm going to kill this bastard.

BATGIRL? SWEETUMS?

ARE YOU LISTENING?



It's already decided.

I HEAR YOU.

GOOD.

COMMUNICATION, LOVE.

THAT'S THE KEY.



THERE I GO AGAIN, HOGGING ALL THE CONVERSATION.

IT JUST HIT ME, YOU HAVEN'T EVEN ANSWERED MY PROPOSAL OF MARRIAGE, DARLING!

JOE

BEFORE...IN ARKHAM.



THAT PAGE HAS
ALL THE ANSWERS.
IT'S ABOUT THE
BAT, YOU SEE.

EVERY SINGLE
THING I KNOW
ABOUT HIM.

SORRY IT'S A BIT
DISORGANIZED. I HAD
TO WRITE SOME OF IT
AFTER BEING BEATEN
SENSELESS.

FYI?
BATARANGS
CONCUSS.



THAT IS A
THING I DID TO
A YOUNG MAN WITH
NO SENSE OF
HUMOR.

AND HIS
DOG.



THAT PAGE
IS JUST MY RECIPE
FOR RUBBER CHICKEN
SOUP.

OH, AND
THE NEXT PAGE
IS REALLY
SPECIAL.

IT'S WHAT I
WOULD DO IF I EVER
MET A NINE-YEAR-OLD
GIRL NAMED SASHA.



MY...

...MY
DAUGHTER
IS NINE.

AND HER
NAME IS
SASHA.



NOW,
DOC...

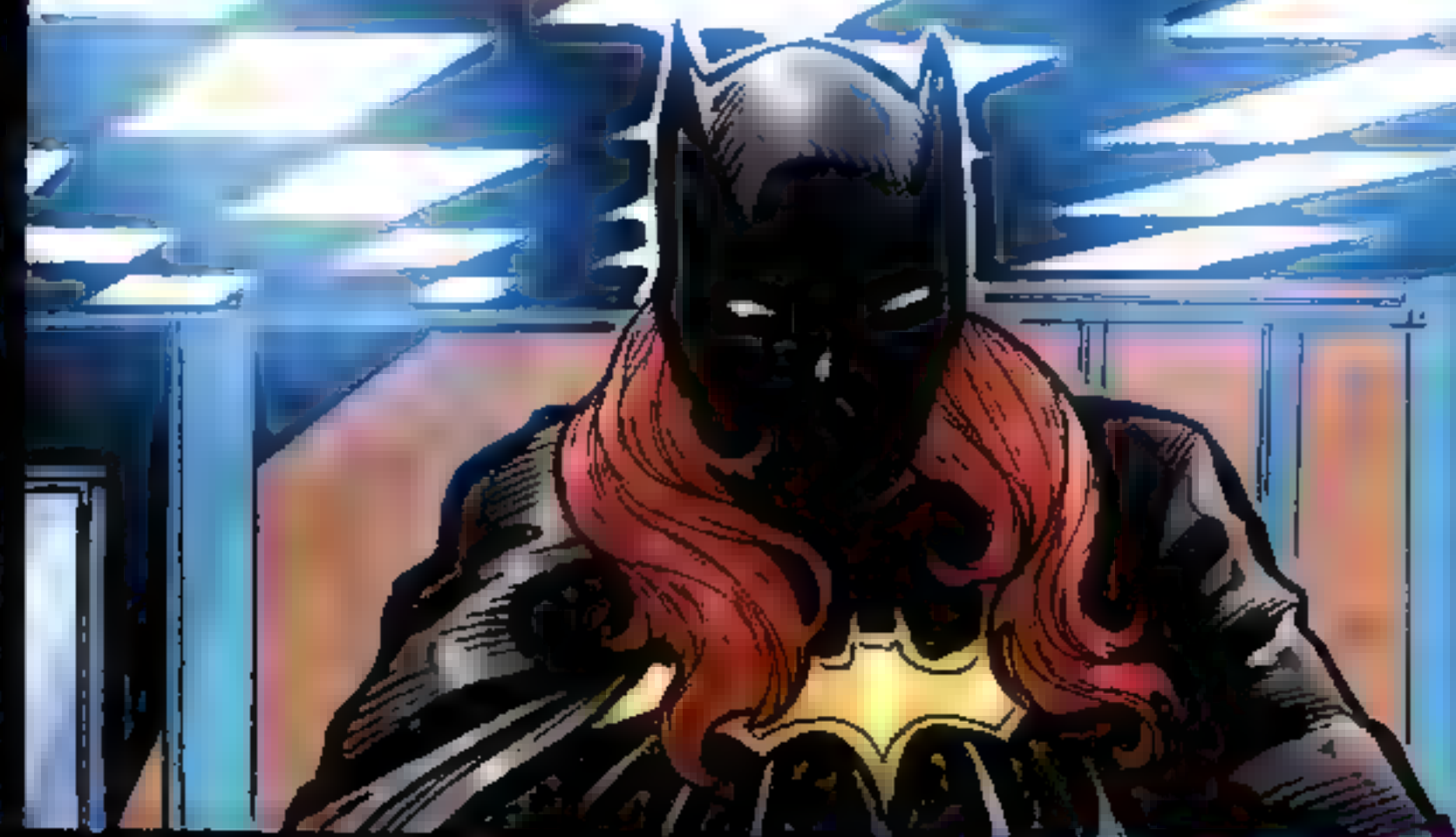
...NO
PEEKING
AHEAD.

NOW.

God knows what his
name is. He always
has a plan, even if
only he can see it.

But this time,
I'm not playing.

I
SAID--



--WILL YOU DO
ME THE VERY
GREAT HONOR OF
BEING MY
SPECIAL POTATO
SALAD FOREVER
AND ALWAYS,
DEAR LITTLE
SHE-BAT?

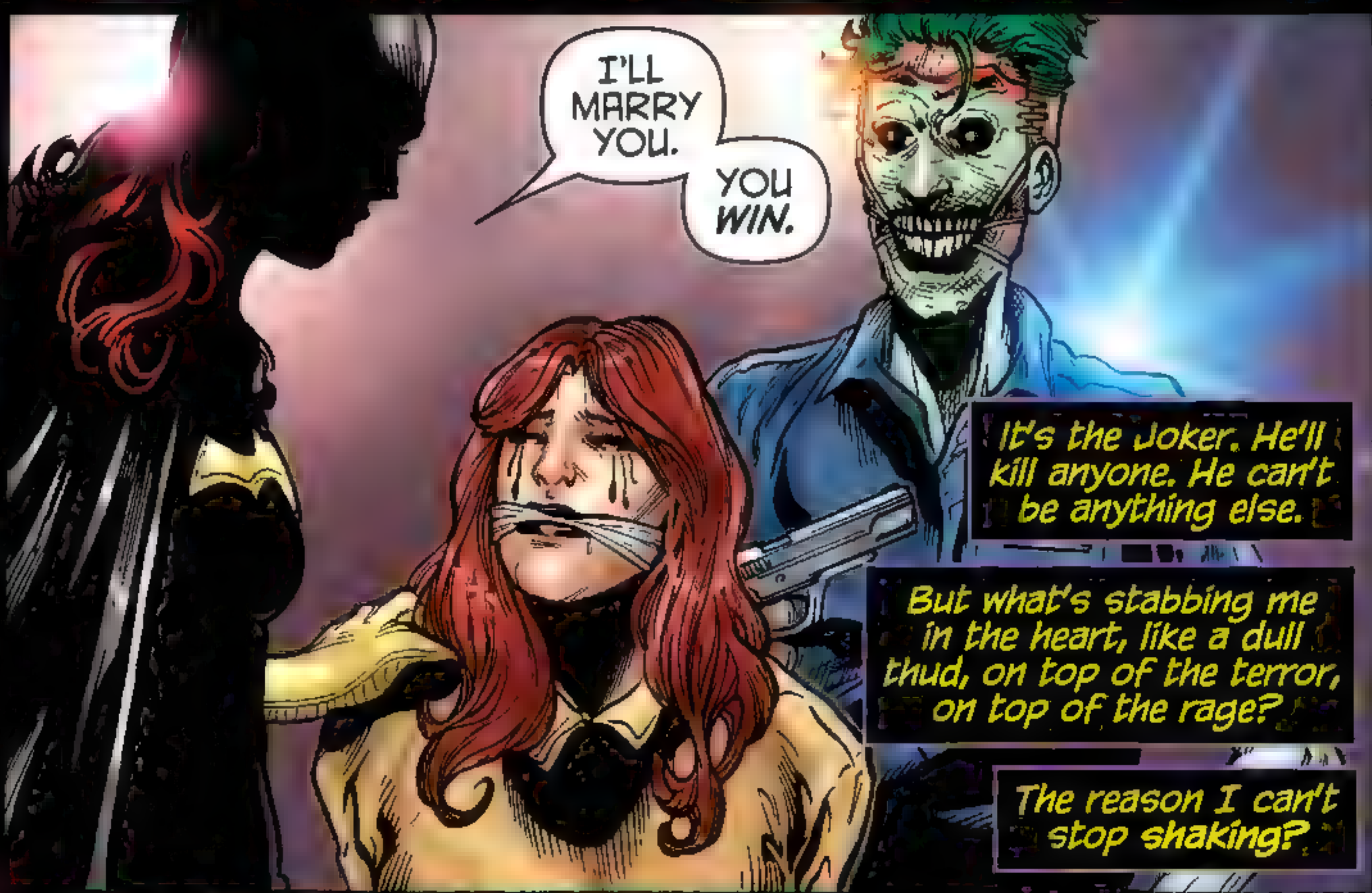
TAKE
YOUR
TIME.

A few months ago, I didn't even
know if my mother was alive or dead.

Now, I can't...I
can't let him do this.

WAIT.

ALL RIGHT.
WHATEVER.



I'LL
MARRY
YOU.

YOU
WIN.

It's the Joker. He'll
kill anyone. He can't
be anything else.

But what's stabbing me
in the heart, like a dull
thud, on top of the terror,
on top of the rage?

The reason I can't
stop shaking?

It was my
brother who
sent me here.

OH.

I REALLY
WISH IT WERE
THAT SIMPLE,
BOOPSI.

My own
brother.



And if I live through this,
as doubtful as that is...

...I'll find you,
James. Promise.

CHERRY HILL SKATE RINK

BZZZT
BZZZT BZZZT

CLOSED
FEAR A PRIVATE
PARTY

YES?

JAMES?

JAMES,
CAN YOU
COME GET
ME?

ALYSIA?

I'M SORRY TO
CALL, BUT...MY ROOMIE
WAS ATTACKED IN OUR
APARTMENT, AND...
AND...

...SHE SAID I HAVE
TO GET *AWAY* FROM
HERE AND I DIDN'T
KNOW WHO TO CALL
BUT YOU.

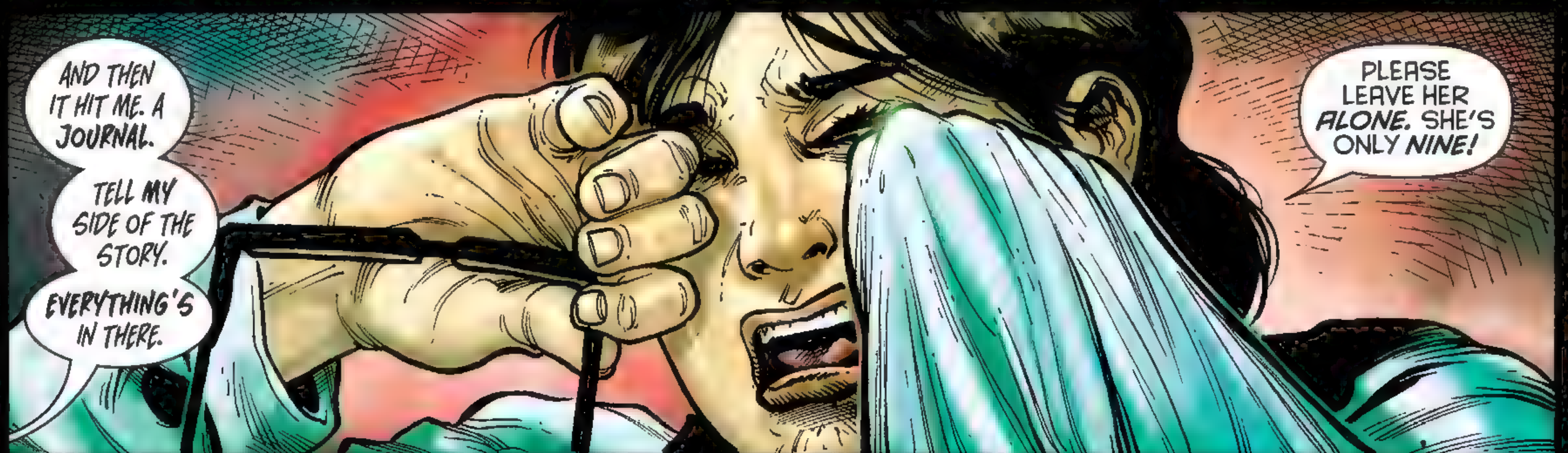
ALYSIA, I'M
RIGHT IN THE
MIDDLE OF
SOMETHING--

PLEASE,
JAMES.

I'M
SCARED.

... I'LL
BE RIGHT
THERE.

DON'T GO
ANYWHERE.





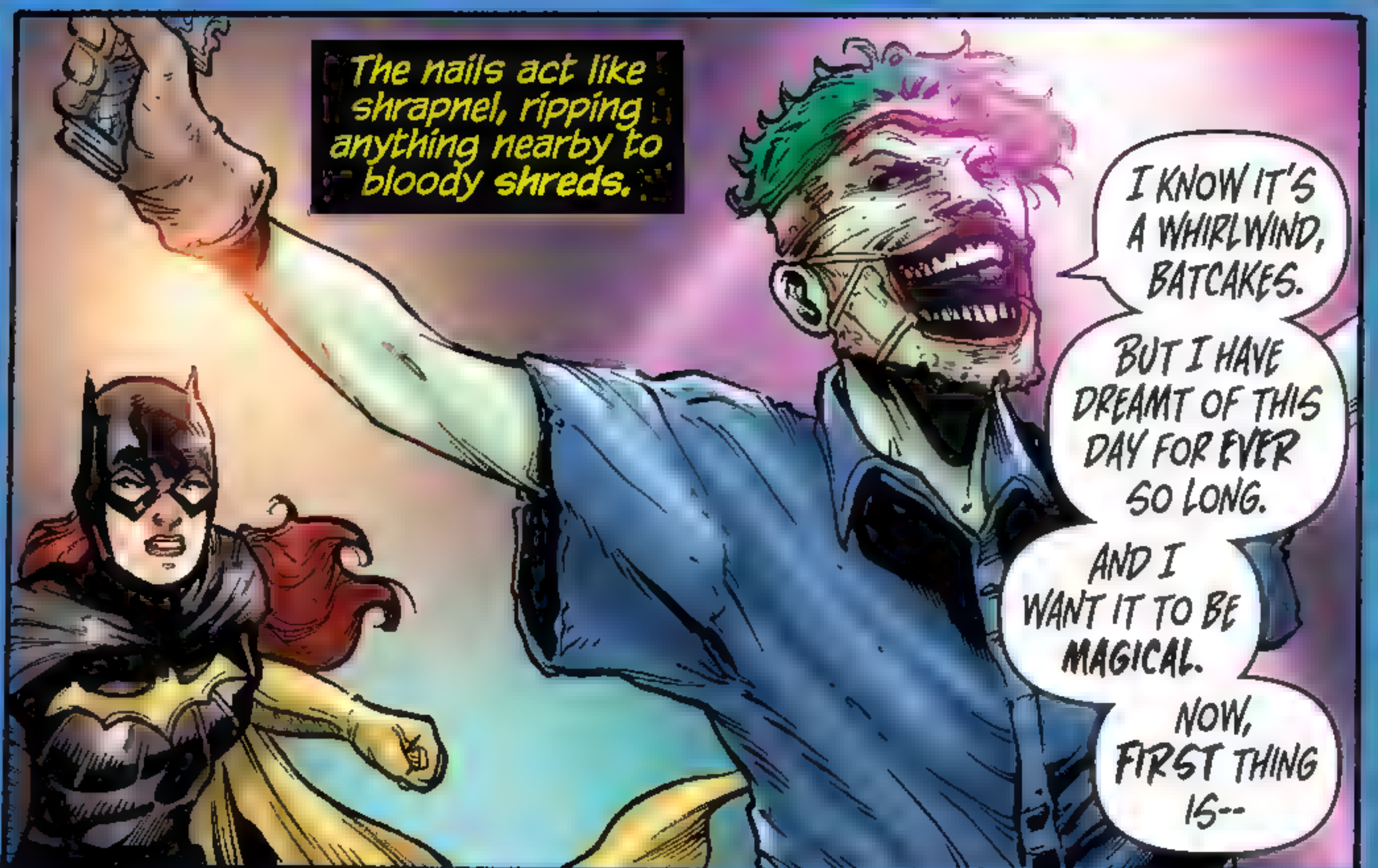
WHAT IS IT YOU WANT?

SEE, THAT'S WHAT I LIKE. AN OLD-FASHIONED GIRL.

TAKES CARE OF HER MAN.

He's got my mother bound and gagged.

And sitting on a five-pound nail bomb.



The nails act like shrapnel, ripping anything nearby to bloody shreds.

I KNOW IT'S A WHIRLWIND, BATCAKES.

BUT I HAVE DREAMT OF THIS DAY FOR EVER SO LONG.

AND I WANT IT TO BE MAGICAL.

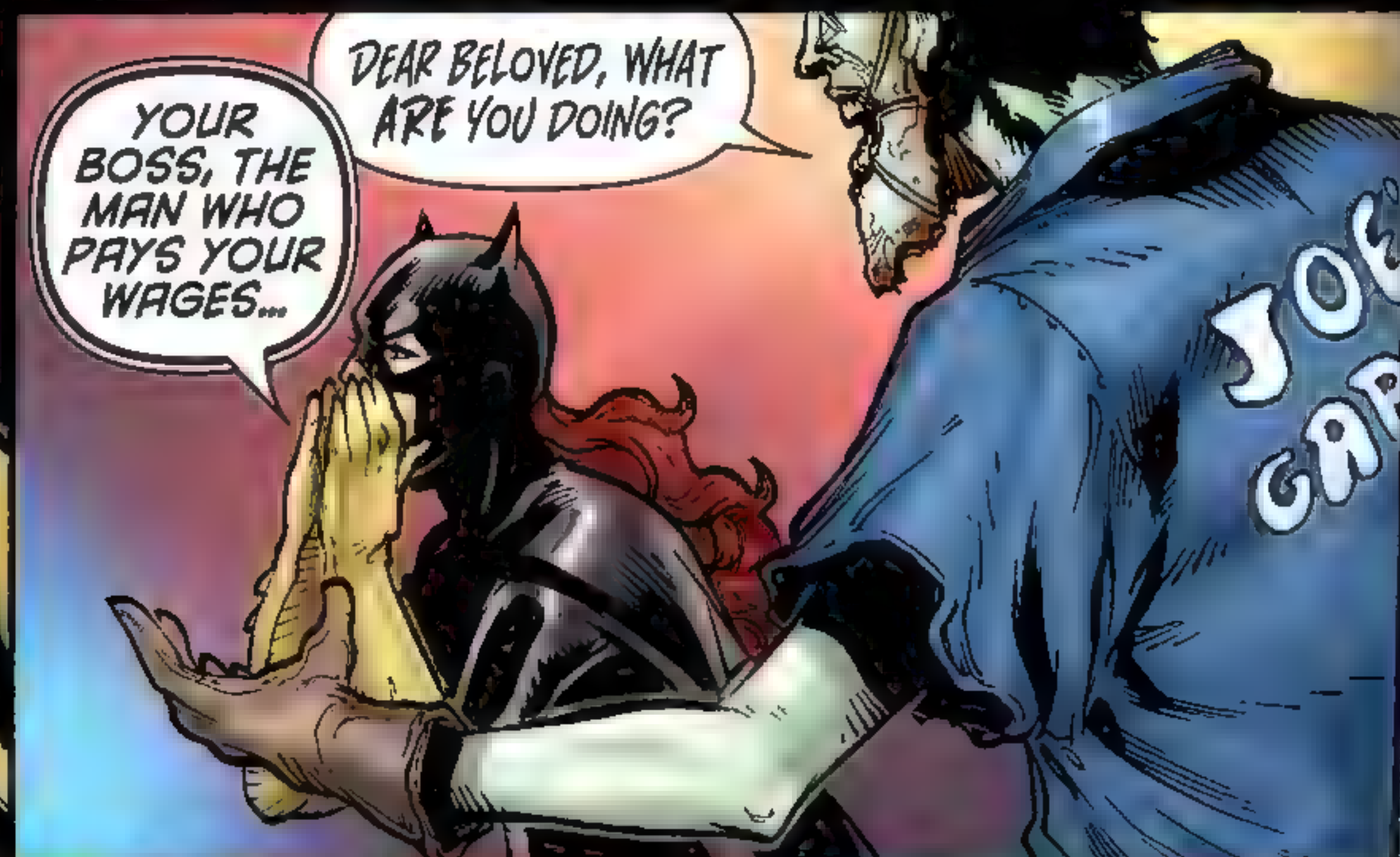
NOW, FIRST THING IS--



Screw you, Joker.

ATTENTION, WHOEVER IS GUARDING THE JOKER IN THIS BUILDING.

THE KILL ZONE OF A FIVE-POUND NAIL BOMB IS AT LEAST FORTY METERS.



YOUR BOSS, THE MAN WHO PAYS YOUR WAGES...

DEAR BELOVED, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?



...IS LESS THAN THREE METERS FROM THE BOMB.



OH, DEAR.



YOU SAID
COMMUNICATION
IS KEY, JOKER.

LET'S
CHAT.

≡GKKLLKK≡

JOE



Oh, no.

We aren't any-
where near done,
you bastard.

LET'S...

...LET'S TALK
ABOUT *YOUR*
MAGICAL DAY,
DARLING.

UURRK

UURRRK

GUGHG

And then I say
some things
that I've never
said before.

Dark
things.

Hateful
things.

NO.

NOT
THIS
TIME.

GGN

YOU WERE
RIGHT ABOUT
ONE THING,
JOKER.

I WILL
TAKE CARE
OF MY
"MAN."

KNOW.

I know
exactly.

Right in the abdomen.
Damage the spine, but
not sever it.

Worth the guilt.
Worth the jail,
the disgrace.

To save God knows
how many lives he'd
have taken.

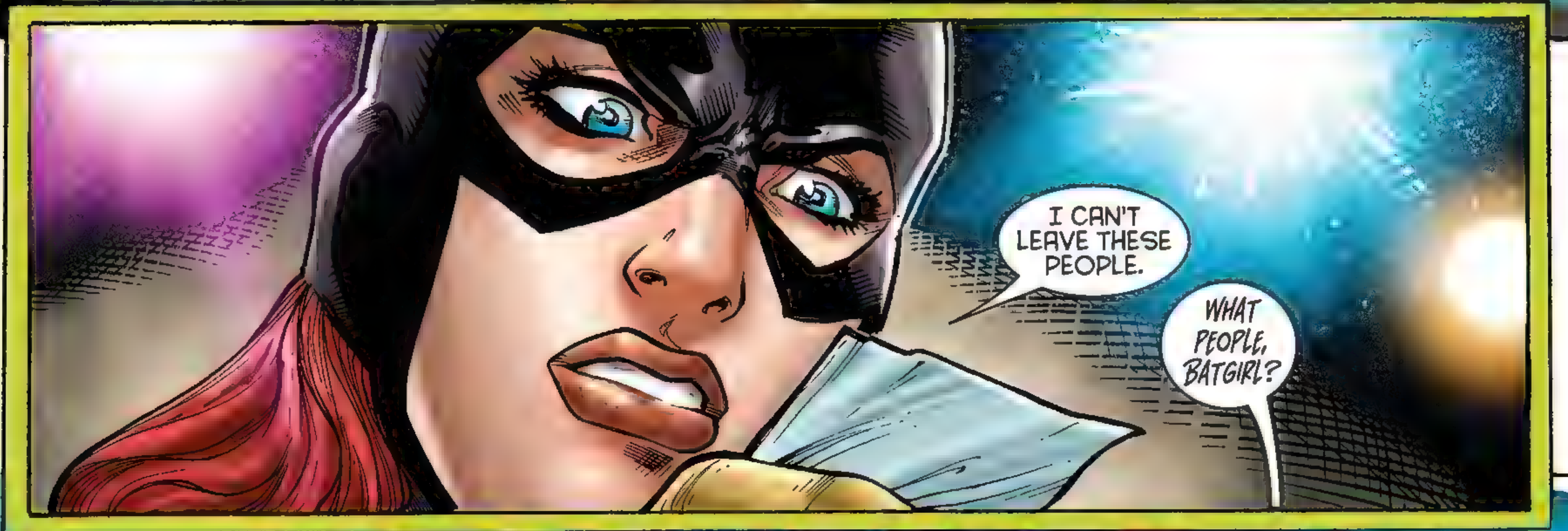
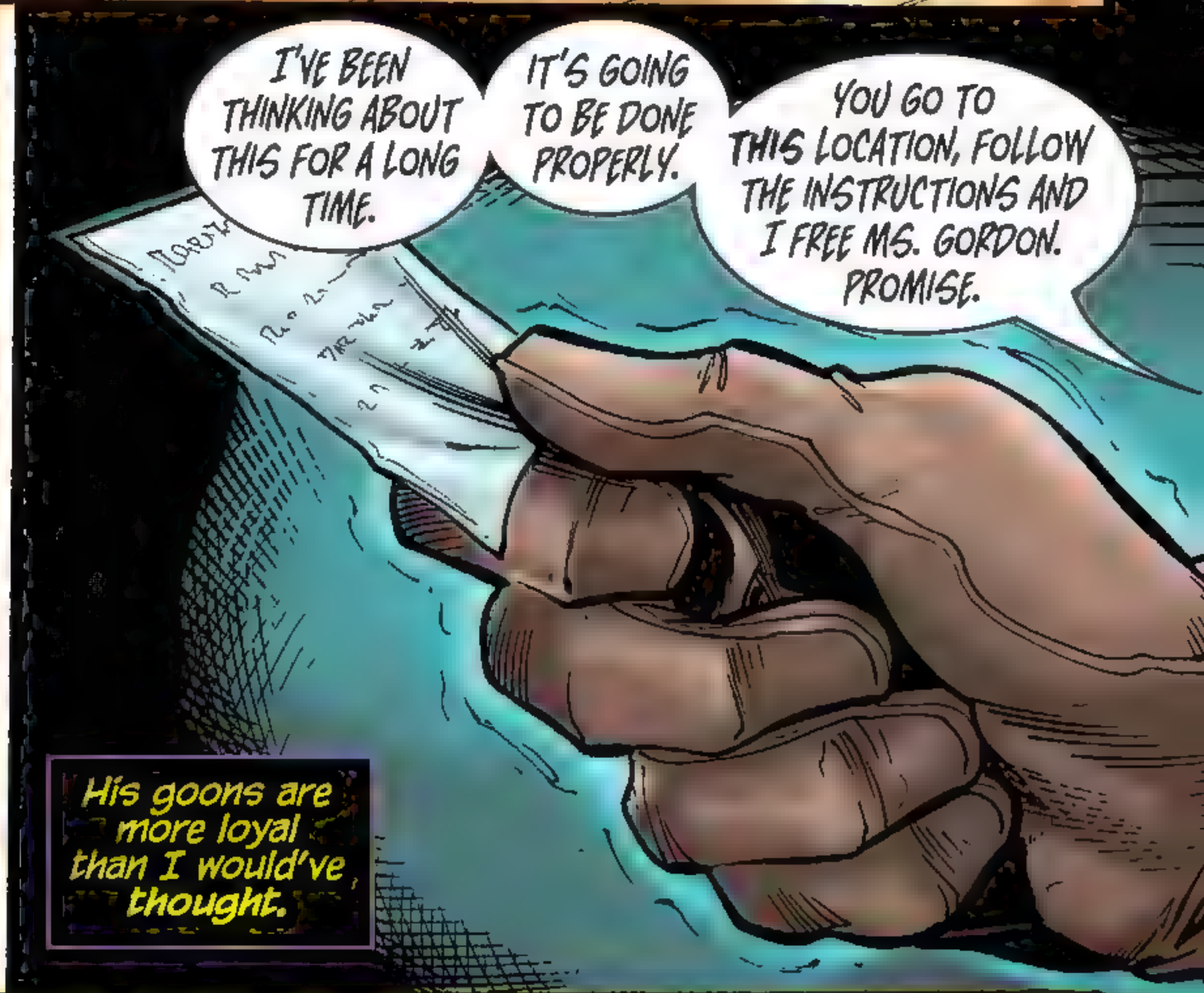
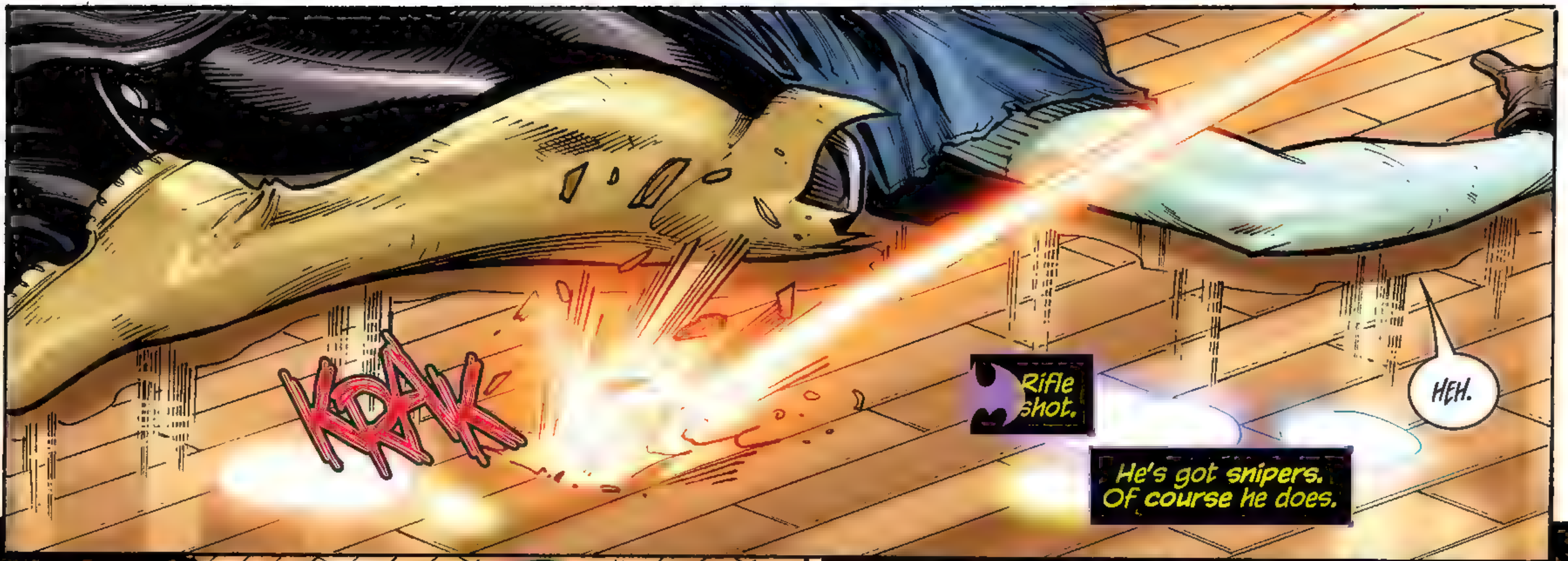
HEH.

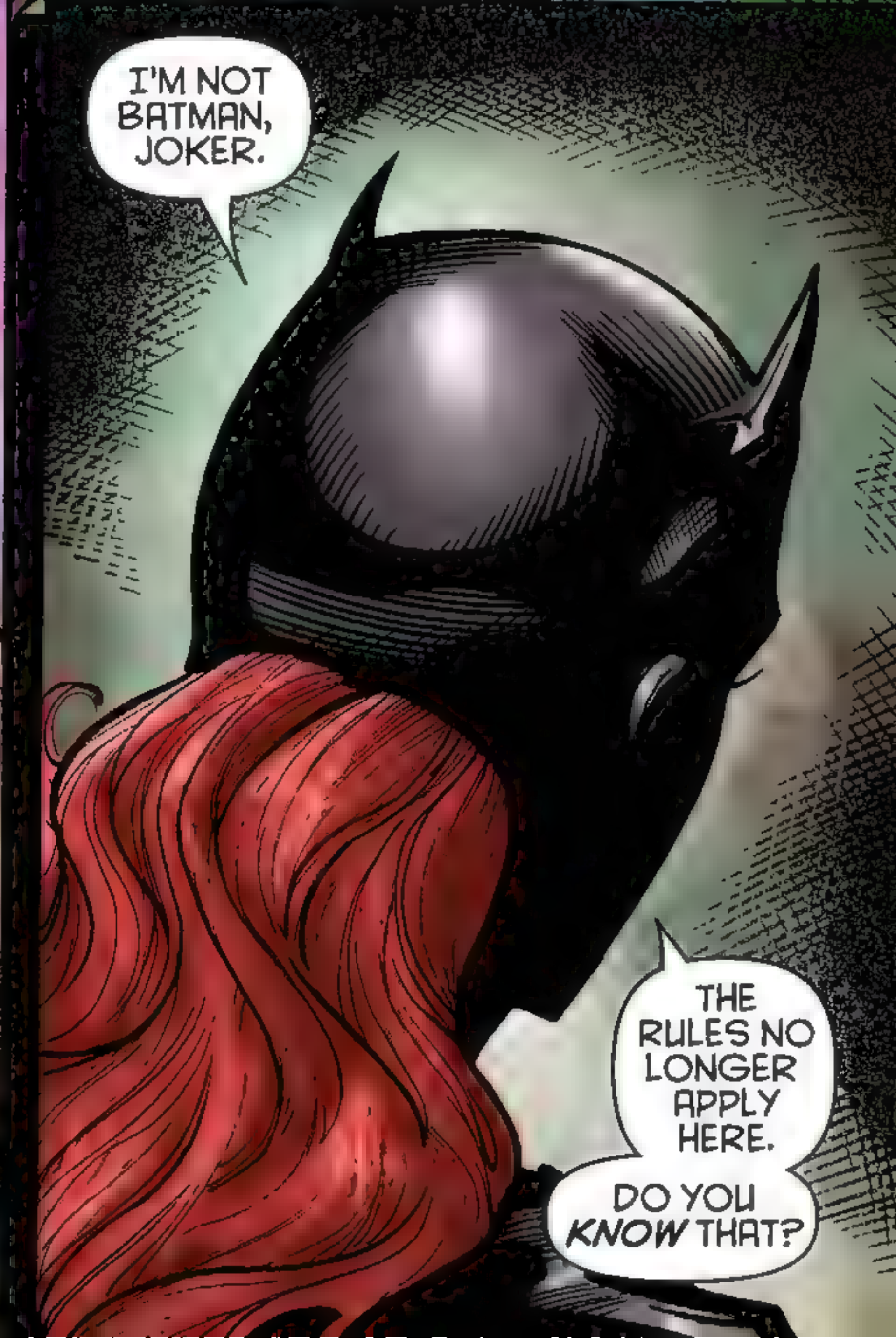
I've thought of this
moment every day
for four years.

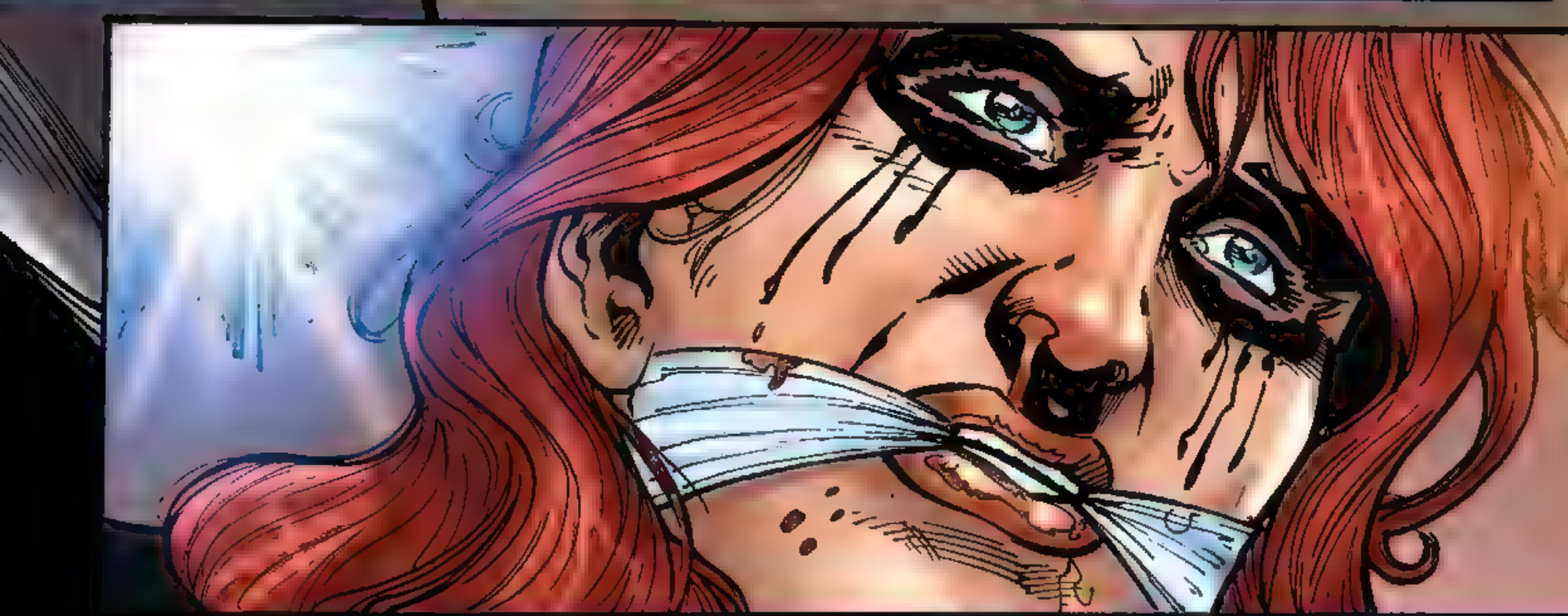
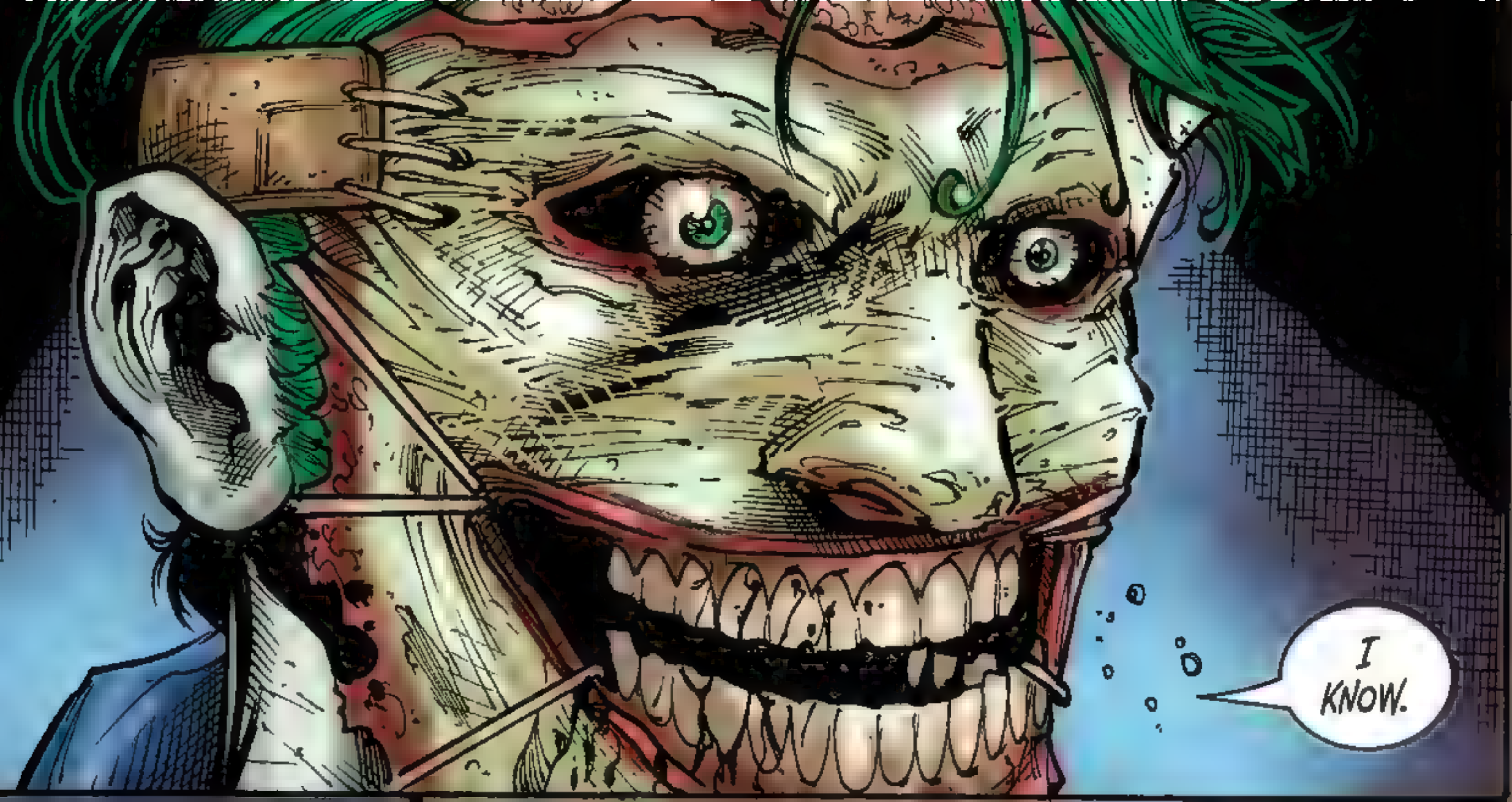
I know exactly
where I'm going
to shoot him.

WHAT'S
SO FUNNY,
JOKER?

MOM AND
DAD ARE GOING
TO LOVE YOU.





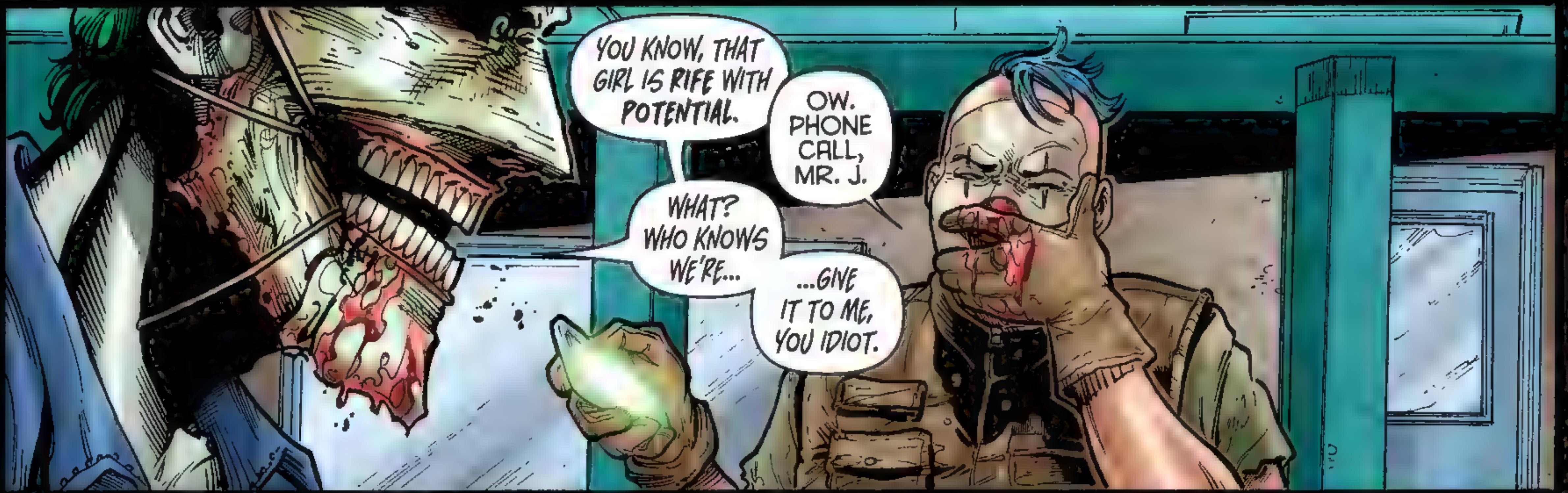


promise,
Mom.

Tonight, one way
or another...



...this man
will never hurt
you again.



YOU KNOW, THAT GIRL IS RIFE WITH POTENTIAL.

OW. PHONE CALL, MR. J.

WHAT? WHO KNOWS WE'RE...

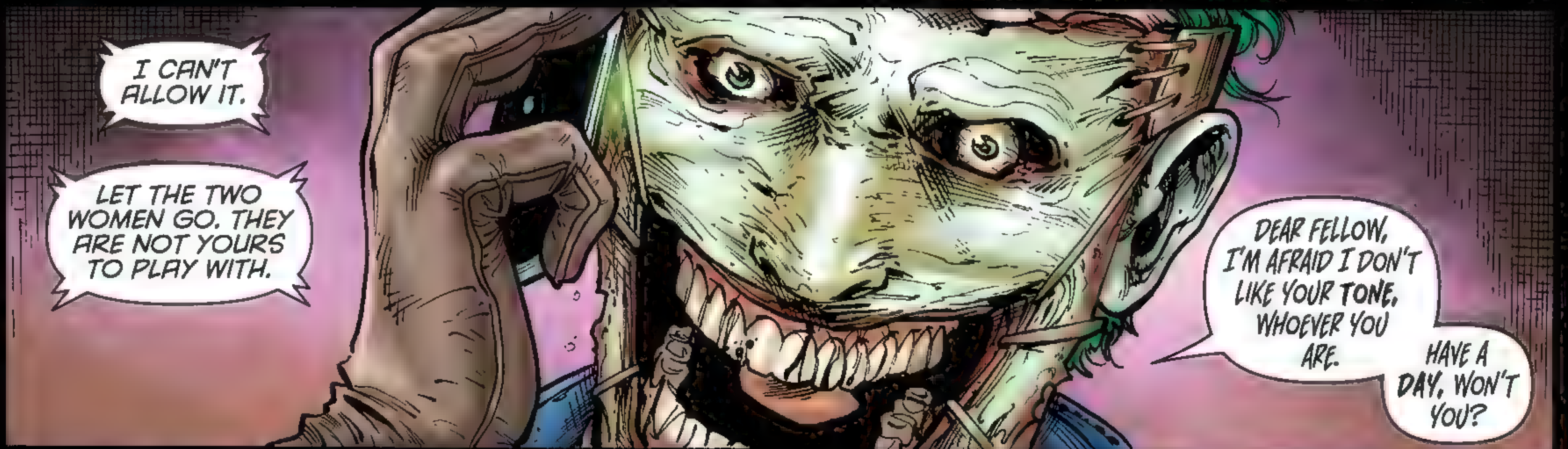
...GIVE IT TO ME, YOU IDIOT.



I WANT YOU TO LISTEN VERY CAREFULLY TO ME. I WILL NOT REPEAT MYSELF.

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE PLANNING.

JAMES...?



I CAN'T ALLOW IT.

LET THE TWO WOMEN GO. THEY ARE NOT YOURS TO PLAY WITH.

DEAR FELLOW, I'M AFRAID I DON'T LIKE YOUR TONE, WHOEVER YOU ARE.

HAVE A DAY, WON'T YOU?



BYE, NOW! **KLIK**

JAMES, WHO...?

WHAT IS GOING ON? WHAT ARE YOU DOING?



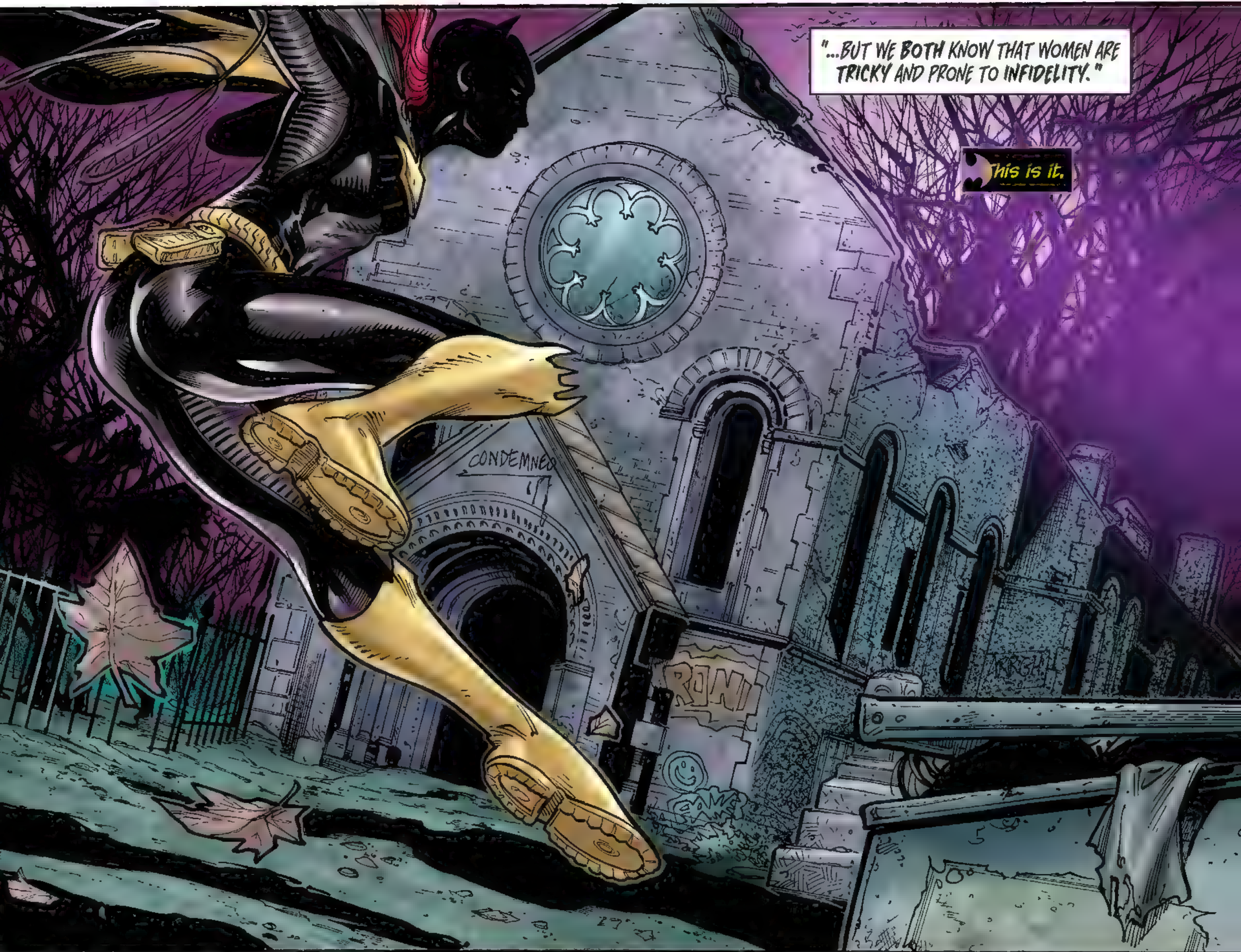
GOING TO HELP MY *SISTER*, APPARENTLY.



WHY ARE YOU TELLING ME THESE THINGS?

WELL, IT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE A WOMAN, RIGHT?

AND WELL, NOT TO BE SEXIST, DOC...



"...BUT WE BOTH KNOW THAT WOMEN ARE TRICKY AND PRONE TO INFIDELITY."

This is it.



There're so many things wrong here, I feel like I'm losing control.

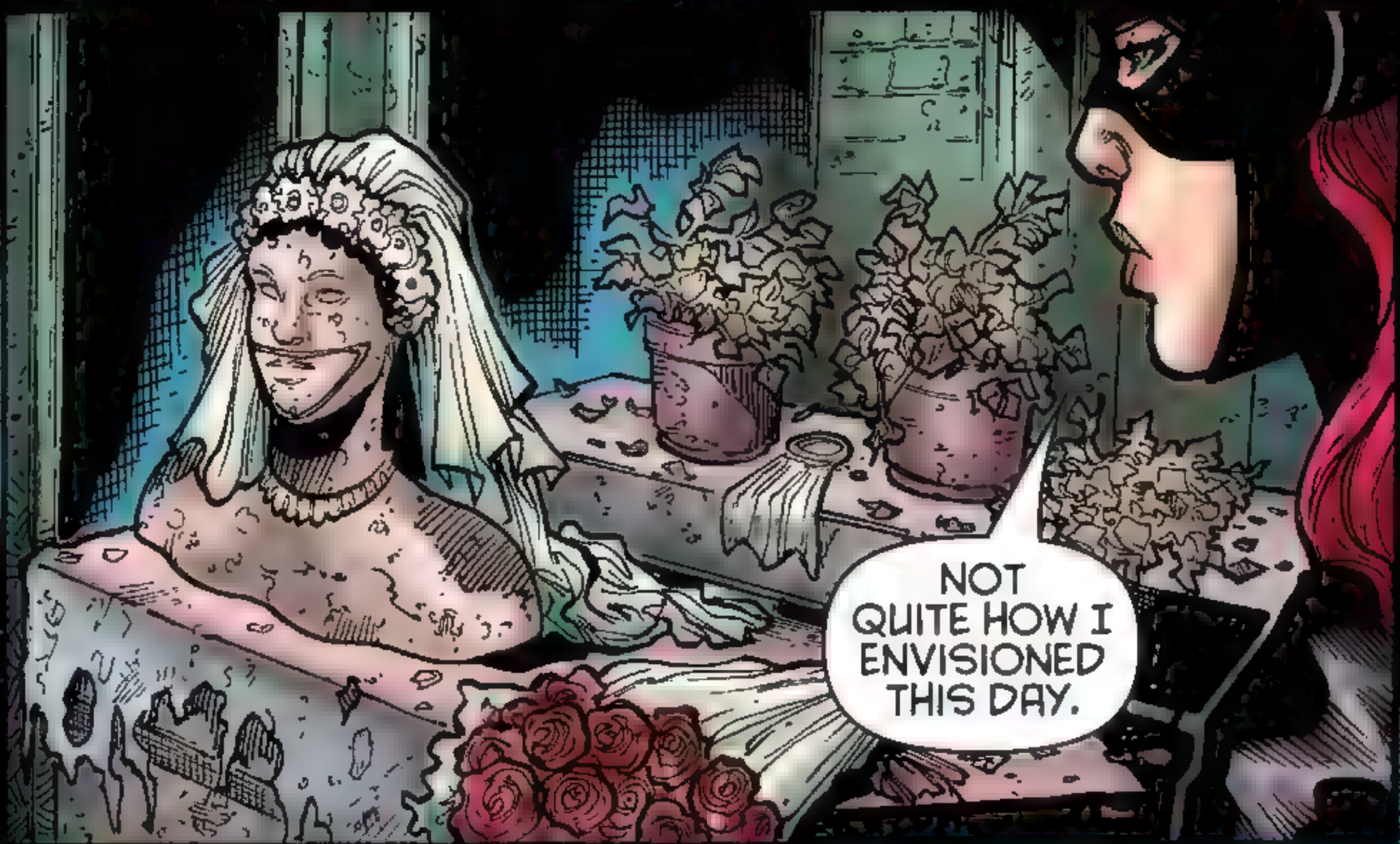


1. GET FLOWERS
2. GET VEIL
3. GET HITCHED

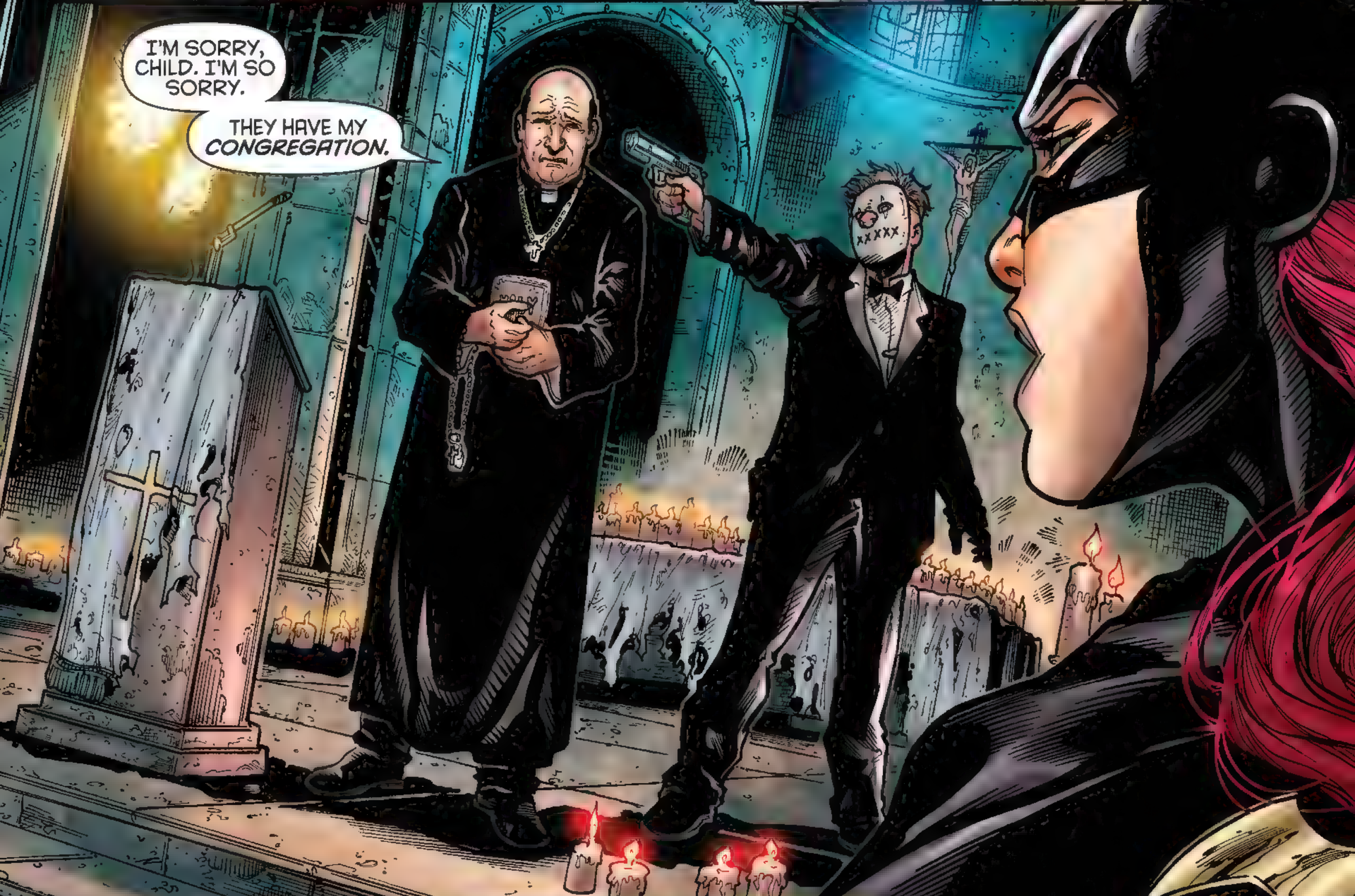
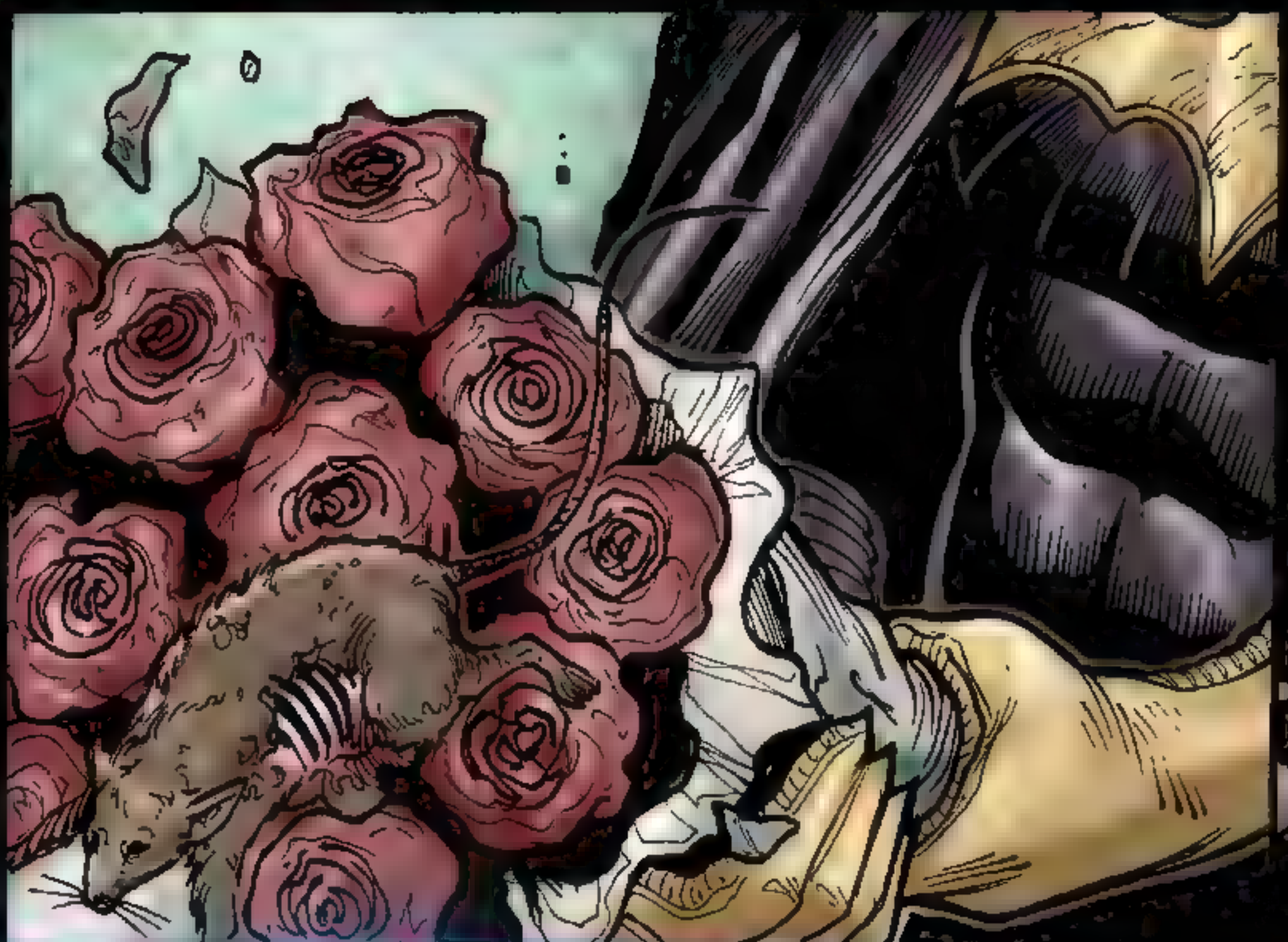


SO I WANTED
TO RUN SOMETHING
BY YOU, DR. YI. AS
A, YOU KNOW,
WOMAN.

WHY MARRY
SOMEONE IF SHE'S
ONLY GONNA CHEAT,
AM I RIGHT?



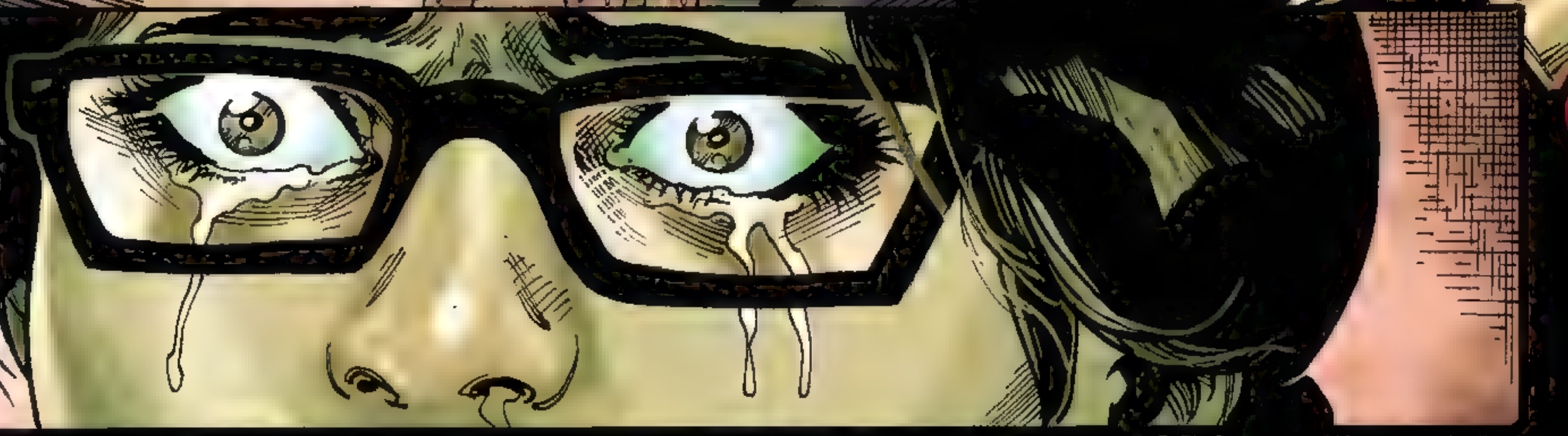
NOT
QUITE HOW I
ENVISIONED
THIS DAY.

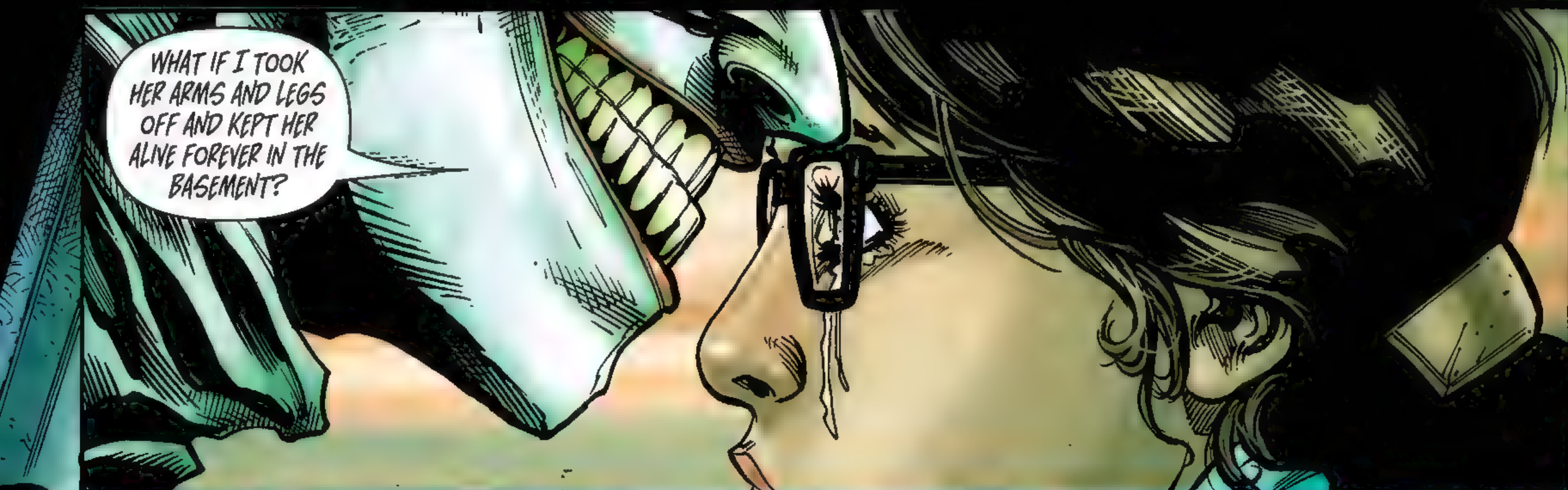


I'M SORRY,
CHILD. I'M SO
SORRY.

THEY HAVE MY
CONGREGATION.

SO I THOUGHT,
WHAT IF, AS A SPECIAL
HONEYMOON TREAT, RIGHT
AFTER THE WEDDING,
LIKE THE MOMENT
AFTER...

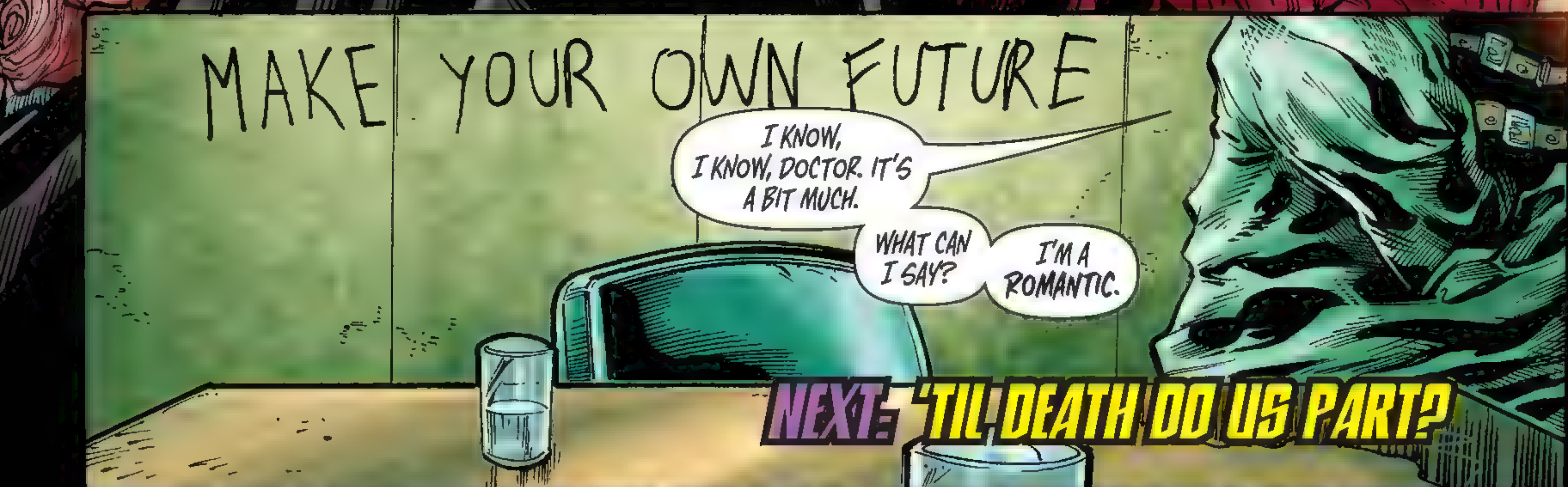




WHAT IF I TOOK
HER ARMS AND LEGS
OFF AND KEPT HER
ALIVE FOREVER IN THE
BASEMENT?



I'M SO
TERRIBLY
SORRY.



MAKE YOUR OWN FUTURE

I KNOW,
I KNOW, DOCTOR. IT'S
A BIT MUCH.

WHAT CAN
I SAY?

I'M A
ROMANTIC.

NEXT: 'TIL DEATH DO US PART?

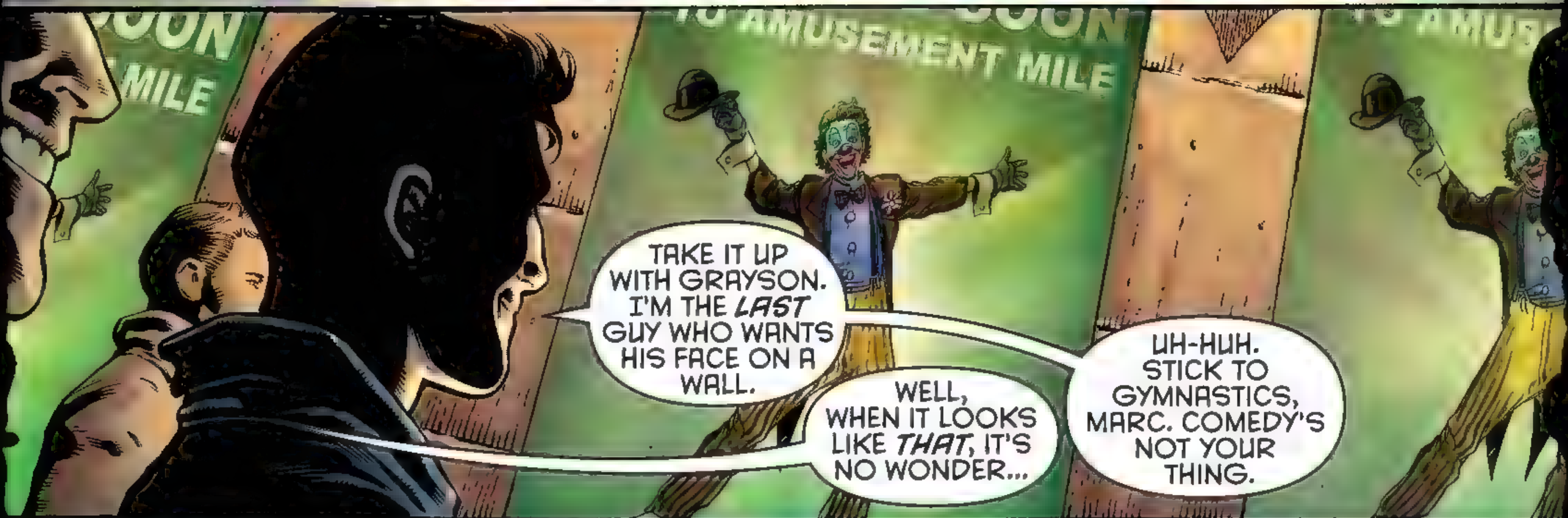
GOTHAM CITY.


THE THINGS ARE EVERYWHERE. HOW COULD YOU MISS 'EM?

ASSUMING YOU DON'T CARE? IT'S EASY.

SAYS THE GUY ON MORE BANNERS THAN ANYONE.

YOU LITERALLY ARE THE POSTER BOY FOR HALY'S CIRCUS, JIMMY.





...WHY
WOULD ANYONE
THINK WE LOOK
ALIKE?

THERE'S
HARDLY A
RESEMBLANCE.

UH,
SORRY...DO
I KNOW
YOU?

OH,
COME ON
NOW, JIMMY--I'M
DISAPPOINTED.
AFTER ALL...

Heh... heh heh
No... heh... NOT
YOU hehe NOT
HEHE

...US CLOWNS
GOTTA STICK
TOGETHER!

YOUUU
EEHEHE-HE
HEHAHAHA
HAHA

HA HA
HAHAHA
HAHAHA
HAHA

OH,
WAIT A
SECOND!

After witnessing the murder of his parents, teenager Richard "Dick" Grayson was taken under Batman's wing and trained as Robin, the Dark Knight's partner in his war on crime. But when the boy became a man, he left the Batcave and now serves his own brand of justice!

DC COMICS™ PRESENTS:
NIGHTWING IN

DEATH OF THE FAMILY CLEANING HOUSE

KYLE HIGGINS Writer • **EDDY BARROWS** Pencils • **EBER FERREIRA** Inks
ROD REIS Colors • **CARLOS M. MANGUAL** Letters • **GREG CAPULLO & FCO PLASCENCIA** Cover
KATIE KUBERT Assistant Editor • **BRIAN CUNNINGHAM** Editor
NIGHTWING CREATED BY MARV WOLFMAN AND GEORGE PÉREZ



"THE JOKER
KNOWS WHO
WE ARE..."



*BATMAN #15. --B.C.

...IT'S THE ONLY EXPLANATION.

AND FOR BATMAN TO THINK OTHERWISE...*

YEAH, WELL, BEING MAD ABOUT IT ISN'T GOING TO HELP ANYTHING RIGHT NOW, NIGHTWING.

I KNOW, BATGIRL.

THEN STOP. FOCUS ON WHAT MATTERS.

WITH THE JOKER BREAKING RAYA OUT OF BLACKGATE PRISON*, ARE YOU HEADING THERE FIRST?

ALL RIGHT, THEN.

*NIGHTWING #14. --B.C.

AFTER I GET HALY'S CIRCUS OUT OF TOWN.

I NEVER SHOULD HAVE KEPT THEM HERE. NOT ONCE THE JOKER TURNED UP.

GOOD LUCK. STAY SAFE.

YOU, TOO.

DEET DEET DEET

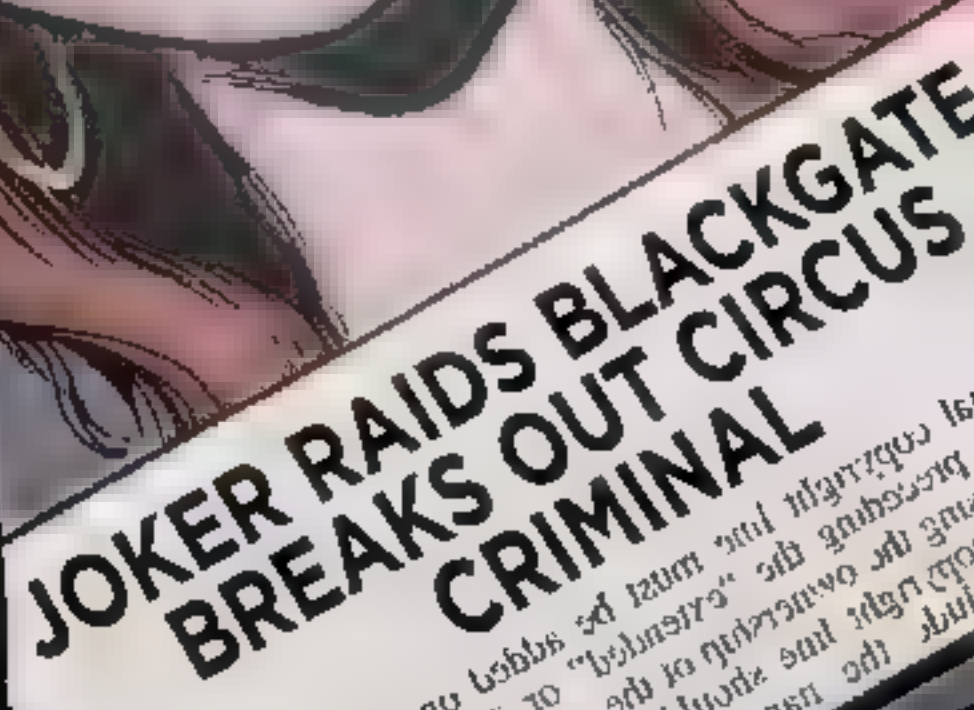
SONIA? THANKS FOR CALLING ME BACK. LISTEN, I NEED EVERYONE TO START PACKING THEIR--

YOU NEED TO GET TO AMUSEMENT MILE, DICK. GET HERE NOW.

WHAT? WHAT'S GOING ON?

JIMMY'S DEAD.







WAKY,
WAKY, LITTLE
GIRL.

IT'S ALMOST
TIME.

WHA...?

WHERE...
WHERE
AM I?

SHH...
SHH...

...ASK
TOO MANY
QUESTIONS...

...AND
YOU'LL RUIN
THE JOKE.

The next six hours
are agony.



I watch the circus members clear the train and everyone head out of the city.

Not one of them looks me in the eye.



By the time the sun comes up, the police have removed Jimmy's body.

And they've secured the rest of the park.



Which lets me slip off to Blackgate.



But after an hour of canvassing Raya's block, I've still got nothing.



=YAWWWN=

Nothing but a serious need for caffeine.



And one last angle...

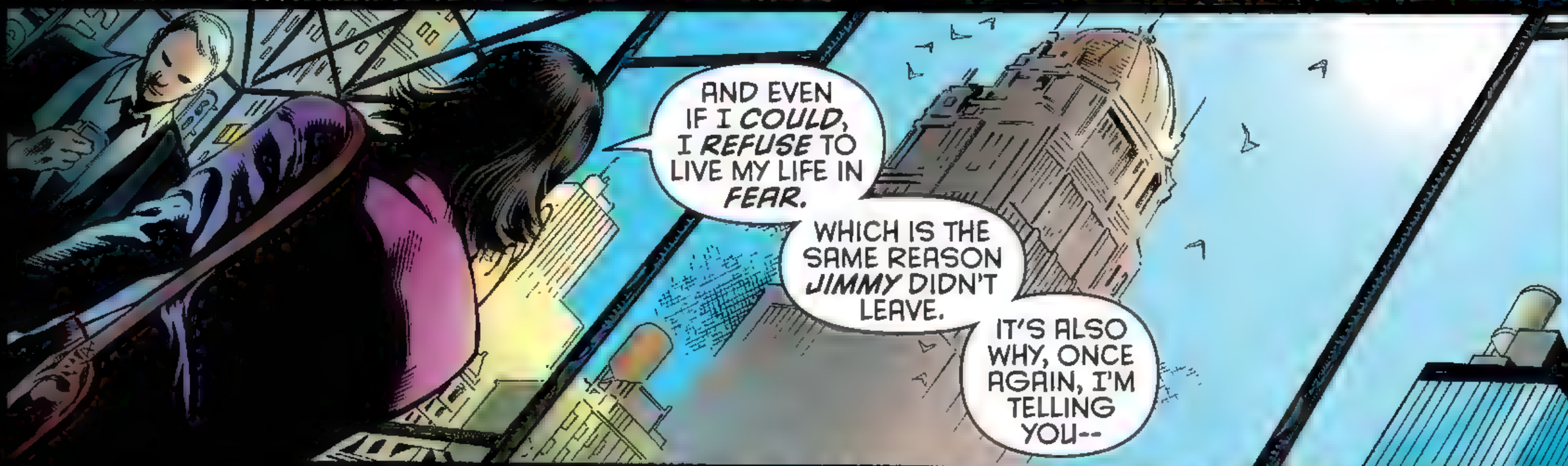




I'M STILL IN
GOTHAM.

SONIA,
I TOLD
YOU--

I'M
ONE OF THE
HEADS OF A
MAJOR FINANCIAL
INSTITUTION, DICK.
I'M NOT GOING
TO JUST PICK UP
AND LEAVE. I
CAN'T.



AND EVEN
IF I *COULD*,
I *REFUSE* TO
LIVE MY LIFE IN
FEAR.

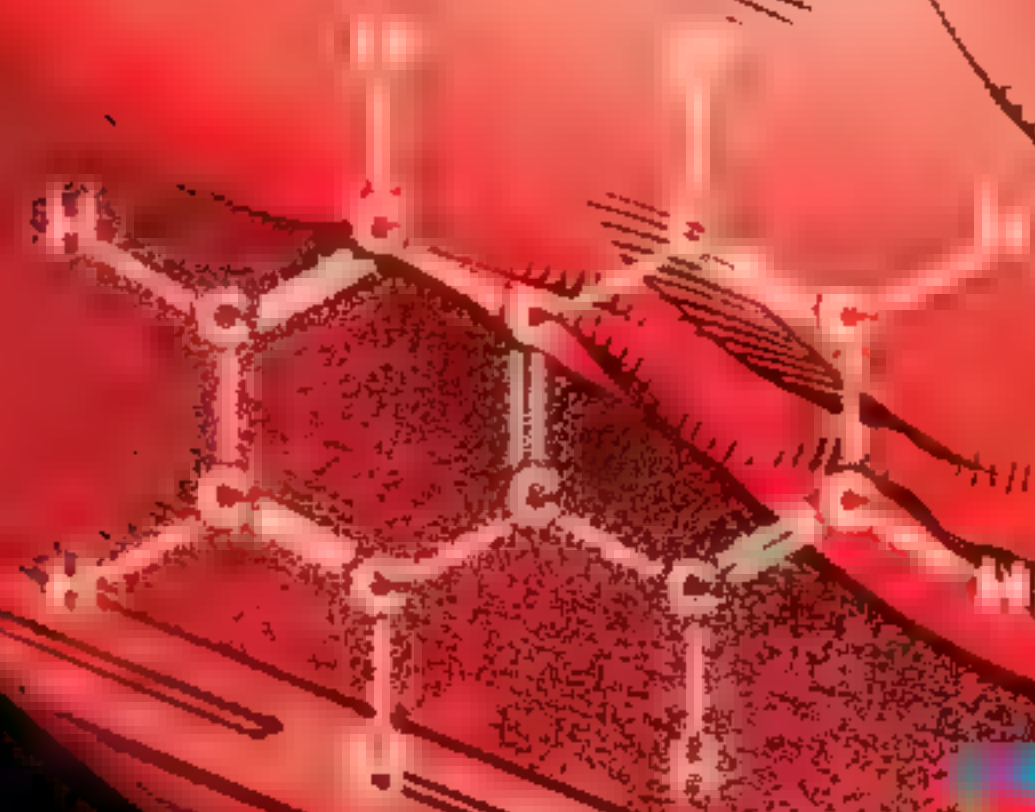
WHICH IS THE
SAME REASON
JIMMY DIDN'T
LEAVE.

IT'S ALSO
WHY, ONCE
AGAIN, I'M
TELLING
YOU--



--THIS
ISN'T YOUR
FAULT.

CHEMICAL ANOMALIES FOUND:
COMPOSITE JET FUEL + KEROSENE
AO-30- DINNSA- DCE-4A-



Jet fuel...?



NAH, DOC,
THEY SAY HE
CAME UP WITH
THE FORMULA
FOR THE GAS
HIMSELF...

DICK?
ARE YOU
THERE?

Dammit.
Need more
time.

SORRY,
SONIA...

...GOTTA
GO.

I'll have to
make a quick trip
to the loft to set
up the computers
for a chemical
analysis...

LATER...

...before
hopping a train
downtown.

...I can't be
too careful.

Doubling back to
shake any tails
takes time.

But at this
point...

DICK...
HEY. THANKS
FOR COMING.
IT WON'T TAKE
LONG.

SO
IT'S JUST
THESE?

YES. AND
INITIALS ON
THE BOTTOM
OF EACH
PAGE.

OKAY.

WHAT
YOU SAID
BEFORE...
THANKS.

WHAT
I SAID
BEFORE IS
THE **TRUTH**,
DICK.

YEAH,
IT'S JUST...
HE WAS MY
FRIEND.

THEY'RE
ALL MY FRIENDS.
I...**ASKED** THEM
TO STAY IN
GOTHAM.

...I
PROMISE.

IT'S
GOING TO
BE OKAY,
DICK...

AND
NOW I FEEL
LIKE...I LET
THEM
DOWN.

YEAH...
I HOPE
SO...



TONY ZUCCO



MY PARENTS

HE KILLED THEM
TONY ZUCCO
KILLED THEM...

SORRY...
IT'S...
SORRY...

WHAT'S
WRONG?

IT'S...I
MEAN...

YOUR DAD
WAS TONY
ZUCCO...

BEEP
BEEP

My chemical analysis
result? Talk about
saved by the--

OH,
MAN...

DICK...?

I'M...
I'M SORRY,
SONIA...

"...BUT THERE'S
SOMEWHERE ELSE
I GOTTA BE..."

KLINE INDUSTRIES...

Five years ago, Kline
Industries was a
rising power in the
aerospace field.

Until allegations of
corporate espionage
drove them towards
bankruptcy...

...and their fuel
formula was proven
to be stolen from
Wayne Enterprises.

It was a
knockoff.

OH, GOOD!
YOU GOT MY
MESSAGE! I'LL
ADMIT...I WAS
WORRIED IT MIGHT
GO OVER YOUR
HEAD.

YOU
KNOW, THIS LAST
YEAR'S BEEN A REAL
SNOOZE TO WATCH,
BAT-FAKE.

I MEAN,
YOU COMING BACK HERE,
DESPERATE TO PROVE
YOURSELF...BEING ALL
SERIOUS...

...YAWN!

HAAA
HAHAHA
HAHA



WHEEEHEHE...

...HEHEHE...

BUT THAT'S
OKAY--THAT'S WHAT
TONIGHT'S ABOUT.
WE'RE GOING TO
THROW A PARTY TO
WAKE YOU UP!

HAAA
HAHANA
HANA

NO...

CONSIDER
THIS...



...THE
INVITATION!

HEH HEHE
HEHEHE

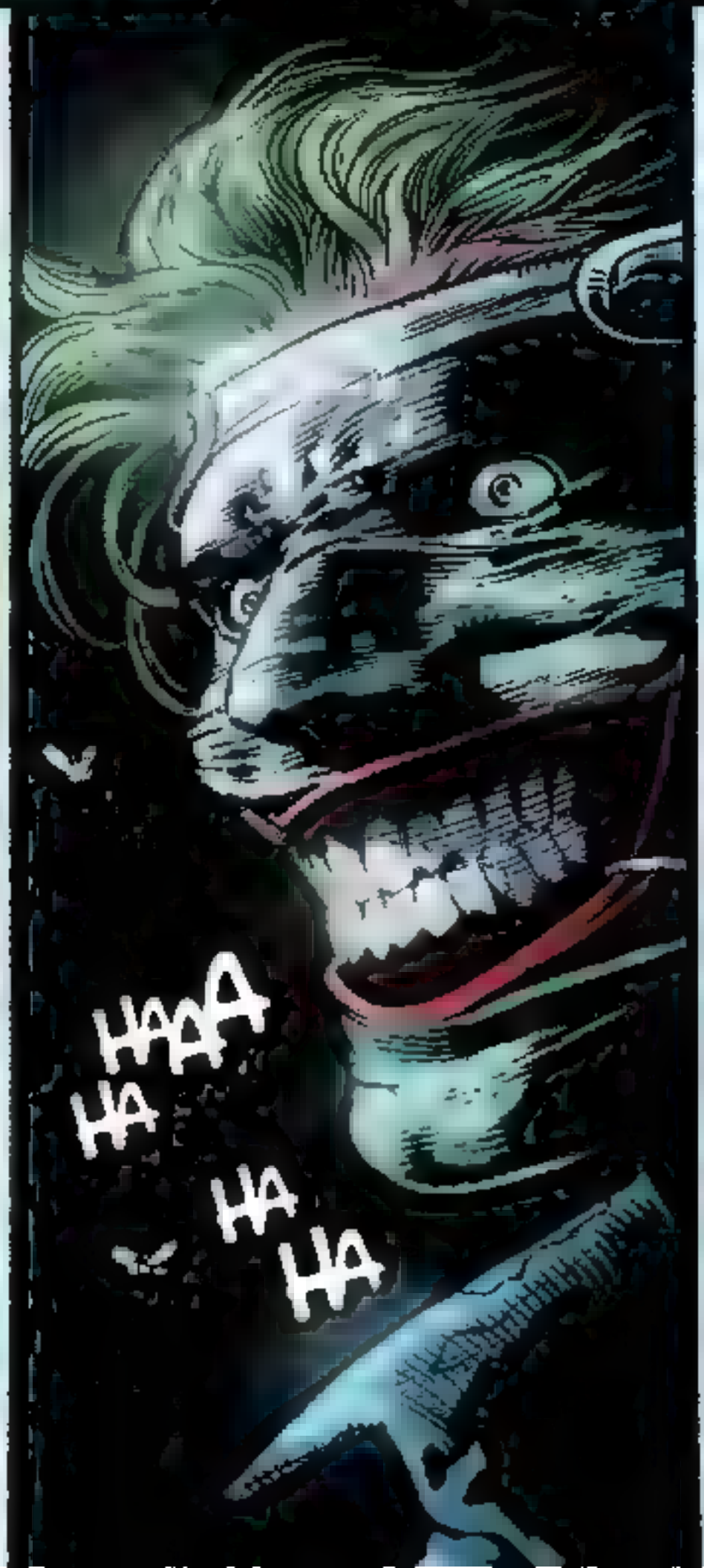


RAYA...

HEHE
HEHEHE
HEHEHE



IT'S
A NICE
TOUCH, RIGHT?
BAT-LITE'S OWN
LITTLE KNOCK-
OFF!



HAHA
HA
HA



HAVE
FUN YOU
TWO!

HAAAAA
HAHAHA



HA
AAAAHAHA
HAHAHA

RAYA--
LISTEN TO ME!



HAHA
HA

THIS ISN'T
YOU! FIGHT
THROUGH IT!
FIGHT--



HA
AAAAHAHA
HAHA

=>UGH<=



HAHA
HAHAHA
HA

=>OOF<=



HA

RAYA--
IT'S ME. YOU
KNOW
ME!

HEHEHE

ARGHH!

SHRRP

HEHE

HEHEHE
HEH HEH
HEH
HEH
HEH

Her body's
breaking down.
Rejecting the
toxin.

She's not
laughing.

RAYA!

HEH HEH
HEH HAA HAAA
HAAAA





HAAAAAAA
HAAAAAHAAAA
HAAAA



STAY
WITH ME, RAYA!
STAY WITH
ME!

HAAAAAAA
HAAAAA

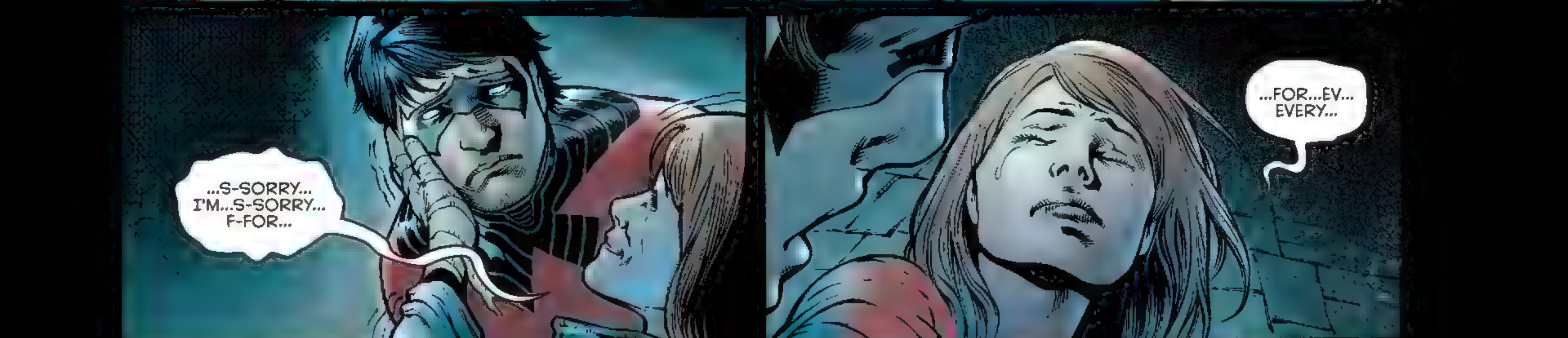


HAAAAA
HAAAAA

No idea of the Formula
Joker used--no idea if
an antitoxin will work.

KSSSSSS

HAAAA AHHHHH...



...S-SORRY...
I'M...S-SORRY...
F-FOR...

...FOR...EV...
EVERY...



RAYA!

It's ten minutes
before I look up.

Before I stop.

Before...

...she's gone.



WHAT THE...?

NO...

NO!!

WHAT:
A SURPRISE PARTY!
WHERE:
AMUSEMENT MILE!
HOSTED BY:
HAL'S CIRCUS

NEXT: THE GREATEST
MOST HORRIFIC
SHOW ON EARTH!



SUICIDE SQUAD

DEATH OF THE FAMILY

GLASS
DAGNINO

14



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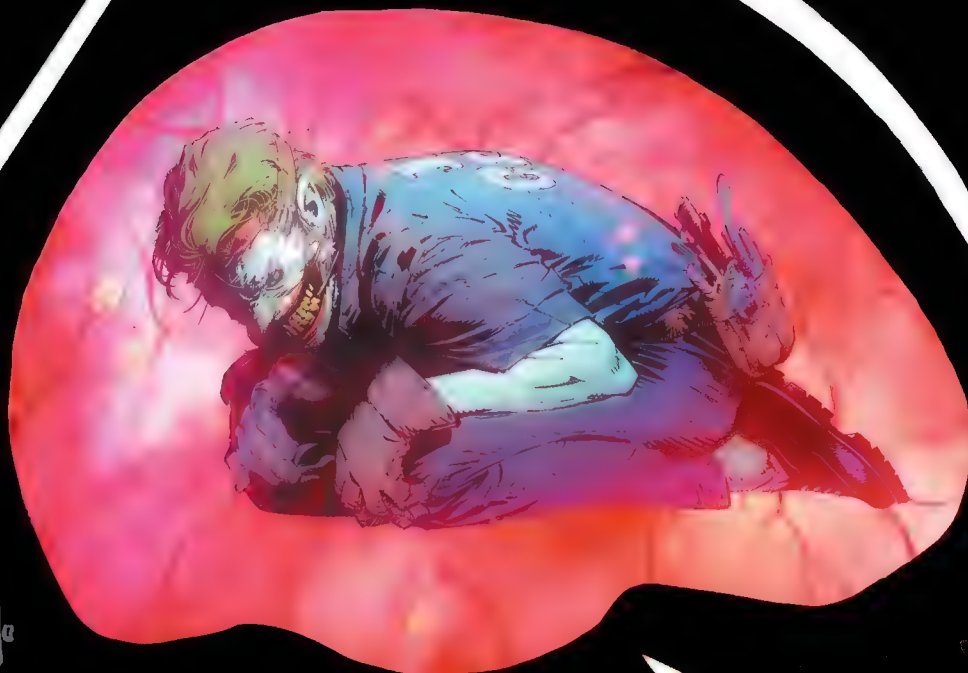
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TOMASI
GLEASON
GRAY

15



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DEATH OF THE FAMILY

BATGIRL™

THE NEW 52!

*You are
cordially
invited...*

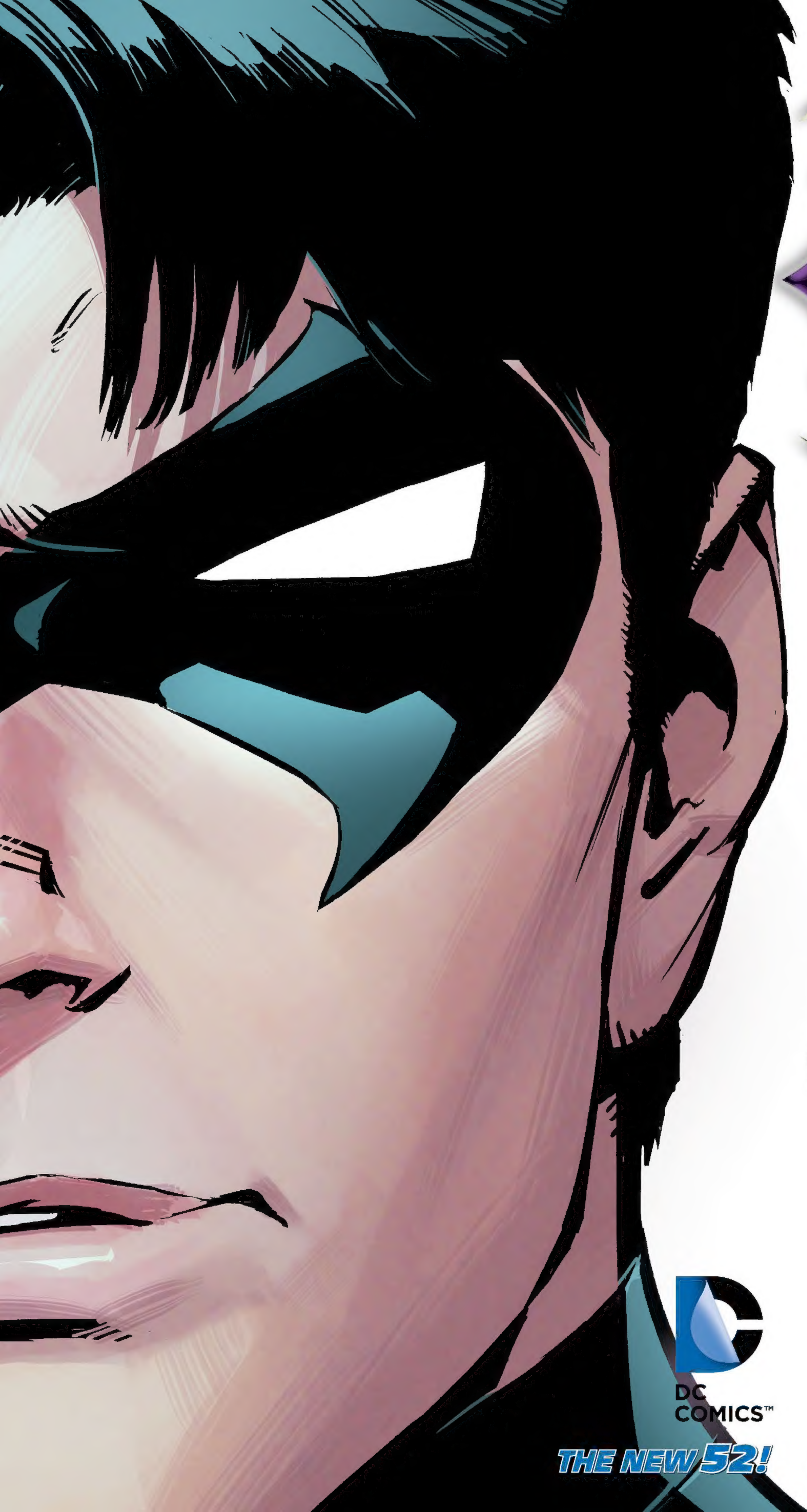


GAIL
SIMONE
DANIEL
SAMPERE
VICENTE
CIFUENTES

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NIGHTWINGTM

DEATH OF THE FAMILY

HIGGINS
BARROWS
FERREIRA

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